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THOUGHTS

ON PARTS OF THE

PROPHECY OF ISAIAH.

BY

BENJAMIN WILLS NEWTON.

PART I.

LONDON:

HOULSTON & WRIGHT, 65, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1868.

*Price Eight Pence.*



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## THOUGHTS ON ISAIAH I.

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WHEN it was said to the watchman, "watchman what of the night?" he answered first, "THE MORNING COMETH." Prominence is ever given by God to the *final* objects of His people's hope. He desires that they should be comforted and apprehend by faith the final joy, before they know the antecedent sorrow. Whatever else may intervene, our hope is glory. We hope for "the morning without clouds." Faith, therefore, ever says, "THE MORNING COMETH." Yet it has to add, "ALSO THE NIGHT." Although already in the night, we nevertheless wait for the night: for the darkest part of the night—that which is emphatically *night*, immediately precedes the morning. Depth of darkness heralds the day-star. Accordingly, we wait for both. We expect the morning; but we expect also the coming of that which is emphatically *night*. It is the object of the prophecy of Isaiah (as indeed of all prophecy) to treat of both these things—to teach us respecting the coming day of brightness, and also respecting the coming night of evil.

Yet we are not concerned with light, only as it shall be in the future day of its millennial brightness; or with darkness, only as it will be in the final hour of

its concentration under Antichrist. We have also to do both with darkness and light in the incipient and fragmentary forms under which they are already developed. Prophecy, though pointing to the future, yet founds its lessons on the past. The matured form of evil's last development is but the ripening of principles long germinant. Every harvest has its seed-time. Except Israel and Christendom had done what they respectively have done for the corruption of Truth and the establishment of falsehood, Antichristianism would never be what it will be. The conflict between light and darkness is no new conflict. It has ever been carried on in the earth since sin first entered. The past, therefore, not less than the future, has its lessons for the servants of the Truth.

Accordingly, the first chapter of this prophecy treats mainly of the past. It reviews the course that Israel had from the beginning trodden. Isaiah called on them to consider their ways and to repent: but they would not. And now the record of those ways is presented to us—"written for our admonition." Christendom is asked whether it can discern no parallelism between Israel's past history and its own? It is no little mercy to be instructed through the example of others. What if that mercy also be despised?

One of the most cherished thoughts of man is, that they are competent, if only sufficiency of light be given, to follow where light leads. Man deems himself able to respond to every claim made by God on his obedience, and asks for a Teacher when really he needs a Saviour.

Accordingly, in Israel this vaunted ability of man was tested. They said that they would obey perfectly in everything: yet when tried they obeyed in nothing. Though again and again pardoned, they again and again trespassed. Instruction, warning, chastisement, were all in vain. They transgressed so that even the very heathen loathed their abominations. "The name of God," said the Apostle, "is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you." And yet, notwithstanding all this, though "the whole head was sick, and the whole heart faint," they refused to recognise their condition and to acknowledge their guilt.

On the contrary, they claimed to appear before God as His accepted worshippers. As their guilt deepened, so the activities of their ritualistic services increased. "Who hath required this at your hands to tread my courts?" They appeared before Him with their incense and oblations, and feasts, and solemn assemblies, and spread forth their hands to make many prayers, whilst yet their sins which were as scarlet remained unrepented of and unforsaken. When the heart becomes hardened into extreme distance from God, it fails to apprehend the accumulated guiltiness caused by the attempt to worship outwardly Him whom it serves not inwardly. The awful discrepancy between words of holiness and ways of wickedness is not discerned. It seems as if men believed that sound had power to sanctify. It seems as if they thought that they make God their debtor if only they profess themselves to be His worshippers, and condescend occasionally to make

with their lips honourable mention of His name. And thus lip-worship (the very thought of which should strike the soul with terror) is made a ground on which self-righteousness founds for itself a claim of merit. Mercy and grace must under such circumstances be despised, for he who can plead merit has no reason to seek refuge in grace: nor can he who deems lip-worship acceptable have any true apprehension either of sin, of holiness, or of God.

One of the chief lessons taught by the history of Israel is the effect of mere ritualistic religion. Ritualism, sacerdotalism, and tradition reigned in Israel. By them Israel was morally fashioned. And what was the result? Did they become lovers of light? The Prophets brought to them light, bright, holy and blessed; but the light they quenched, and those who brought it they destroyed. At last Immanuel came. His mission was attested by Scripture, attested by miracle, attested by the voice of the Father from heaven, attested by His own superhuman perfectness (for He brought into earth the perfectness of Heaven) yet they closed their eyes to all this evidence; they "hid their faces from Him;" Him in whom the Father delighted, they execrated. And when the Holy Ghost was sent, and when many appeared amongst them whose lives and testimony attested the presence of the living power of God, them too they hated. All who came within their own ritualistic circle (even though manifestly the servants of unrighteousness and of iniquity) they honoured: but all who stood without (even though marked with the lineaments

of heaven) they loathed and persecuted. Such is ever the path of Ritualism. The present Ritualism of Christendom accepts and loads with honours the most vicious among men, if only they "conform" to their traditional order; but the holiest on earth if they "conform" not, are pronounced accursed, or else consigned to the uncovenanted mercies of God. The men who do these things boast that they are "successors of the Apostles," and that "the blood of the Apostles flows in their veins." There have ever been false Apostles transforming themselves into the Apostles of Christ, but their end shall be according to their works. "Thou hast tried them who say they are Apostles and are not, and hast found them liars." Apostolic claims should be sustained by apostolic miracles, apostolic doctrines, apostolic practices. Where false claims are carelessly accepted, it is an evidence that they who accept them are *willingly* deceived. They wish to be distant from the pure light of truth. Men love a lie when the lie pleases them. Oh that men would remember the doom pronounced on "whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." "Blessed are they that wash their garments (*οἱ πλυνοντες τας στολας αυτων*) that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the City. Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie"—(*πας φιλων και ποιων ψευδος*).—There are no lies of greater heinousness than religious lies.

Well would it have been for Christendom if it had



learned the lesson which Israel's fall was designed to teach ; but it might almost be supposed (so close has been the parallelism) that Christendom had studied Israel's history with the view of seeking, rather than of avoiding, the shoals on which they foundered. Which of the descriptions of iniquity in the chapter before us—which of its denunciations is not as applicable to Christendom as to Israel? “To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord. . . . . When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Ye shall not go on [continue] to bring lying oblation : incense—it is to me abomination ; so are new moons and sabbath, and the calling of the assembly ; *I cannot bear iniquity and solemn meeting* . . . . . And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide my face from you : and when ye multiply prayer I am one that heareth not ; your hands are full of blood.” And yet the sacrifices of Israel were not inventions of their own. They were ordained of God as types of that one great Sacrifice which has now been once and for ever offered. Their sin consisted not in offering sacrifice, but in offering it with unclean hands : whereas the self-appointed priesthood of Christendom have dared to devise a worship and sacrifice of their own. They have invented for themselves a sacrifice, whereby the great declaration of God that “there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin” is nullified. They affirm that further sacrifice for sin *is* needed : they pretend that they offer day by day an atoning sacrifice for the sins of the living and

the dead. Not only are their hearts and their lips unclean, but their act in sacrificing is rebellion.

The great doctrine of Christianity is that the Son of God has redeemed, and by redeeming has made heirs of glory all who believe on His saving name. As men we owe unto God a double debt—a debt of obedience; and having failed in that, a debt of suffering. Both these claims have been met for all God's believing people. In their stead Immanuel has obeyed: in their stead Immanuel has suffered. In Him God has become God our Redeemer: even as He was before God our Creator. Thus believers are constituted righteous—thus by the declared sentence of God they are justified, and justification brings to glory,—“whom He justified, them He also glorified.”

This cardinal doctrine of our holy faith was maintained in its purity while the Apostles lived. The Churches were for a time epistles of Christ—living expressions of His mind. But after the death of the Apostles nothing could exceed the rapidity of the decay. The declension of Israel after the death of Joshua was not more rapid. Whilst the Apostles lived, the cause of the fall of Israel was recognised. The difference between a Covenant of works and a Covenant of grace was apprehended. Israel had voluntarily placed themselves under a Covenant of works, and had undertaken to earn blessing for themselves by rendering a perfect unsinning obedience unto God. They said that they would enter into life by keeping faithfully God's commandments. They refused to be brought under that

“better Covenant” in which God undertakes on the ground of the substitutional obedience and suffering of Another to give freely all that is needful for life and glory. The Apostles, and they over whom they watched, apprehended this. They apprehended the reason of Israel’s fall, and gloried in the grace which Israel had despised. For a time the testimonies of Christianity went forth as brightness. But as soon as the Apostles died the Churches lapsed. Christendom corrupted itself. Having for its mission to bear the testimonies of grace into a world that could not answer to the claims of righteousness, it soon ceased to testify either to righteousness, or to grace. It became worldly; corrupted the gospel; identified itself with the philosophy and secularism of the age; quenched by Tradition the light of Scripture, and claimed for its self-created priesthood powers which the Apostles themselves had not—powers which belong exclusively to God. Thus the great modern Instructress of Christendom claims to be able to give faith. Her first address to the poor babe when dragged into her net and brought to the threshold of her, so-called temple, is, “What dost thou demand of the Church of God?” And the answer put in the lips of the unconscious suckling is, “FAITH.” They who can give faith, can no doubt give salvation: for they must be as God.\*

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\* The order of Baptism in the Church of Rome commences thus. The priest advancing to meet those who have brought the infant to the threshold of the Church, says, What dost thou seek of the Church of God?

The spheres in which post-apostolic Christianity has developed itself have been three. First, in the Patriarchate Churches of the East—over whom, because of their corruptions, Mahomedanism early swept as the scourge of God. But they have not repented. The next great sphere was Western Europe. There we have seen the reign of Romanism. What Truth is there that Romanism has not either mutilated or destroyed? By the fiction of continued *authoritative* inspiration, like that vouchsafed to the Apostles, it has exalted its own Traditions, and degraded Scripture: and thereby set itself in rebellion against the one only Legislator. The next and latest sphere is that in which Protestantism has acted.

The mercies which God vouchsafed to Judah and Jerusalem whilst separate from idolatrous Israel, were not greater than those which He has granted to the Protestant section of Christendom. Protestantism was, in Luther and others, the necessary result of exercised con-

*The godfather replies:* Faith.

*Priest.* What does faith procure to thee?

*Godfather.* Eternal life.

*Priest.* If then thou desireth to enter into life, keep the commandments. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself.

Thus these persons who pretend to do what the Apostles themselves could not do, namely, *give faith*, end by giving no faith at all, but preach justification by works. Salvation by grace through faith they know not. How awful the words of the Apostle to such; "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."

sciences seeking to obey God. They separated from corrupt and idolatrous Christendom on the same principle on which Moses separated the Tabernacle from the Camp of Israel when Israel were bowing down before the golden Calf. Moses *pitched the Tabernacle without the camp*, and called on all who were on the Lord's side to join him there. Israel was itself a separated body. They had been separated from Egypt, and stood in contrast therewith: but when they who had been thus separated became themselves idolatrous, a SECOND separation was required. It was needful that they too should be separated from. Such was the position that Protestantism assumed towards ostensibly separated Christendom. It is necessarily an antagonistic position—admitting of no compromise. Israel *professedly* repented: but Ritualistic Christendom has not. It cleaves to its idolatries, and to tradition.

To maintain the sole authority of the Word of God against those who had been brought by Tradition into superstitions and idolatries not less debasing than those of Paganism, was a high and holy object. But much faith, much light, much close obedience, much personal grace was needed—the more so, because recurrence to the Word of God, after long departure from it, was sure to disclose abundant weakness and failure, even in those whose hearts were true and faithful. So was it with the remnant of Israel in the days of Nehemiah. When first they heard again the Word of God, from which they had long been severed, they rejoiced: but as soon as they had pondered on it, and discovered the extent of

their departure from its commandments and their great present feebleness, they wept. But weakness, if there be confession, affords scope for the mercies of God. He is not one who, when there is repentance, upbraideth with the past. He bends in grace to the condition of His people, as He did to Israel then, saying, "Let joy in Jehovah be your strength." But trustfulness in God implies separation from His enemies. They who in Ezra's time sought to rebuild the Temple of the Lord, declined the proffered co-operation of the stranger. They shunned even his aid—much more his control; and so, trusting in the Lord they prospered. They knew that none save the people of the Lord can really work for the Lord. Jehoshaphat chose to link himself with Ahab. But what was the result? He defied the admonitions of God, persecuted God's servant who delivered them, and was driven dishonoured from the battle-field.

It is not my purpose here to enlarge on the causes of the corruption of Protestantism. This at least is obvious. It did not, in the days of its early development, avoid Jehoshaphat-like alliances with those who knew not God. It did not steadily act upon the principle, "my kingdom is not of this world." It did not recognise that until the day of man ends, the *secular* as well as the ecclesiastical systems of the world remain unreached by, and hostile to, the Truth as it is in Jesus. Ecclesiasticism was dreaded, but Secularism was hoped in; as if Herod might be confided in if only Caiaphas were eschewed. Accordingly, the records of professing Protestantism

add another dark and blood-stained page to the world's evil history. The course of Protestant Episcopacy, in Scotland more especially, has been tracked with blood. Nevertheless Protestantism has been the sphere in which Truth has found a shelter. Apart from Protestantism what would have become of Scripture-Truth? Catholicism would have proscribed it and banished it from the earth.

But where God works for good there Satan chiefly works for evil. It would be vain to deny that there have risen up in the midst of Protestant Christendom a band of men whose enmity against God's Truth as revealed in Scripture, has seldom, perhaps never, been exceeded. Their very acquaintance with light has given bitterness as well as potency to their enmity. Hatred cannot display itself against that which it knows not: but that which encompasses us closely we must either hate or love. Protestantism has stood within a circle of great and blessed light: apostate Protestants, therefore, know better than others what they hate—what they betray. Judas-like, they avail themselves of their knowledge of Truth to destroy it. They betray what they once professed to love. Having stood for a season within the circle of light, they withdraw from it—renounce it—blaspheme it. They count the blood of the covenant wherewith they were professedly sanctified an unholy thing, and do despite unto the spirit of grace. “Withdrawal unto perdition” (*ὑποστολή εἰς ἀπώλειαν*) is written over their heads.

Long ago, while the developments of Rationalistic

infidelity among the German Protestants was in its infancy, a pastor in Germany wrote as follows :

“ The unmerited goodness of God has brought me to the  
“ seventy-fourth year of my life, and nearly to the fiftieth  
“ of my pastoral labours. During this long career countless  
“ changes have occurred, largely affecting men within and  
“ beyond the pale of Christianity, but not, as it seems to me,  
“ for the better. Persecution in matters of conscience has  
“ passed away, and cruelties are unknown in matters of reli-  
“ gion ; but, on the other hand, there is dominant an un-  
“ measured license and a shameless frivolity in speaking and  
“ writing of spiritual things. Unbelief has seated itself upon  
“ the throne of Superstition. Every one feels as free to ridi-  
“ cule Holy Writ as to read it. Good and excellent institu-  
“ tions are established, but injustice, cruelty, ignorance, and  
“ disobedience, do not seem to be diminished. Science is  
“ fostered, but morals are not mended. Men hope to become  
“ known for learning rather than for a Godfearing spirit.  
“ This is my thought when I compare present times with  
“ past. Those I do not despise, and these I cannot wholly  
“ praise. Many things have been changed rather than bet-  
“ tered. What is old is looked at on its dark side, and what  
“ is new on its bright one.”

This was written in 1770. Since then what history can be more awful than that of Germany. Blasphemous infidelity has swept over it like a plague. The so-called philosophic Christianity of Germany has refused to believe any thing that its own consciousness attests not, or that its own feeling approves not. Adherence to a strict interpretation of Scripture has been ridiculed and reviled. Man has sat in judgment upon God. Old



intellectual and religious notions (it has been boastfully said) have been as much shattered by the moral revolution in Germany, as were old governmental ideas by the political revolution in France. Germany has gloried in its dethronement of Tradition, *and of Scripture too*. It has sought to break every fetter that is not self-imposed. Yet it has not been able to rid itself of the chastening hand of God. Devastating wars and other judgments have fallen on it in quick succession. Yet it has not repented. And now England, whence, it is said, the poison first emanated,\* is greedily imbibing it, and rushing madly on in the same path of ruin. Although society in England may seem for the present to be hesitating between the rival claims of Sacerdotalism and Latitudinarianism, the hesitation will be of no long continuance. Governmentally, England has already given in her adhesion to the latter.

A few months ago† Sacerdotalism in Rome gathered together her strength, and once again repeated her claim to be the spiritual Mistress of the world. There has seldom, if ever, been a greater display of her mitred power. Once again in high sounding words of emptiness she promulgated her dogmas, and would fain have

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\* "In the eighteenth century William Tindal, Thomas Morgan, and Lord Bolingbroke, inaugurated this infidel movement. We confine ourselves to the last named, because he formed as it were the step of transition to the French deists, who worked more directly upon the Germans than the English did. Bolingbroke is the real precursor of Voltaire."—*Hagenbach's German Rationalism*, p. 43.

† In June, 1867.

awed the nations into submission. But she has a rival, and a dangerous one. At the very same moment there was another and far more comprehensive gathering of peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings, in that vast Temple of Human Fraternity which art, and science, and commerce have reared in Paris. Rome may assemble her priests and prelates, but Man's Temple in Paris can gather all nations. Not that it belongs to Paris, or to any other people. Its platform is as wide as earth. Men of all creeds and of all conditions, priests and people, princes and peasants, Mahomedans, Brahmins, Jews and Greeks, men who have a religion, and men who have no religion, have a common interest there. Fellowship in earthly things is the object. Men congregate there as lords of the earth, resolved on developing and mastering its resources. They meet to praise and honour one another for the triumphs of the past, and to encourage for triumphs to come. Religious truth, whether real or pretended, must draw no circle of restrictiveness *there*, nor interpose any barrier to the happy fraternity of man as man. Even if Truth were a certain thing, it would be well, they think, to immolate it on the altar of universal concord: but seeing that Neology and Philosophy have shown that it is an *uncertain thing*, why (say they) should we be expected to contend for a phantom? Can we wonder then that governments and peoples with tendencies like these should look favourably on Neology? Neology has fought well for them against the authority of revealed Truth, and has cleared the way for their expansive

system—a system accommodating enough to give even Christianity a place if it will consent to be received as one among many “modes of thought.” Nothing indeed is excluded save the authoritative, pure Truth of God; and that must be excluded because it claims, necessarily and rightfully claims, *supremacy*—a claim that ill suits those whose great object is to please all men—to gratify by acquiescence, and to conciliate by compromise. Such a system it is evident will command an influence that it is utterly impossible for restrictiveness to gain. Accordingly, the exclusiveness even of Mahomedanism and Judaism are beginning to yield. As to secularized Protestantism it has long coveted this widened way; and even Roman Sacerdotalism, though struggling still, will sooner or later be obliged to succumb before a system of truthlessness mightier and more attractive than its own.\*

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\* Since the above was written Pan-Anglicanism with its semi-popish doctrines has, by its Synod, sought to strengthen itself and to form for itself a kind of governmental centre in Lambeth. But *in England*, Pan-Anglicanism has a master, and a strong one. The State appoints its Bishops; controls its revenues; makes and (by the Privy Council Committee) administers its laws. If therefore Latitudinarianism rules in the State (and can any one doubt this?) what becomes of Sacerdotalism in the Convocation? It must finally succumb. We know that all the countries of the ἡ οἰκουμένη, the Roman world—eastern and western (and of these England is one) will finally give themselves up to Latitudinarianism and Antichrist. Neology has already attained a legalised standing in the Established Church: and there can be little doubt that the Establishment *in England*, while it continues, will become one of the most potent instruments in the world for introducing the reign

Such are the principles with which Western Europe is now entering, with the view of reviving, those ancient countries of the East which were the seats of the world's early civilization. From Egypt, Jerusalem, Assyria, Asia Minor and Greece, have emanated the laws and institutions which have abidingly stamped their impress upon the whole earth. Around those names the history of human greatness in its earliest developments revolves. But all this greatness has been laid low. It has been smitten down under the righteous judgments of God because of its iniquity. Now, however, men have resolved to revive it;\* and for a season they will

of Latitudinarianism. Doctrinal Romanism and Neology can alike find a place in it and be honoured.

In the Colonies it is not impossible that Anglicanism may secure for itself free action, and may perhaps succeed in upholding those sacerdotal and ritualistic doctrines of which we now hear so much. But when the Master of the feast comes to inspect the guests that have gathered around His table, will He recognise as meet for His presence the robe that Ritualism has given to its servants? Will He not say—"Friend how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless." This parable bears on the Teachers of Christendom no less solemnly than those which precede it bear on the Teachers of Israel. "When the *chief-priests and Pharisees* had heard His parables, they perceived that He spake of them." Matt. xxi. 45.

\* "The remembrance of the greatness of those countries (writes the Emperor of the French) inspires a very natural wish, namely, that henceforth the jealousy of the great powers may no longer prevent the East from shaking off the dust of centuries, and from being born again to life and civilization." Life of Cæsar. Vol. I. p. 163.

See also the following extract from the letter of the Paris cor-

succeed. Indeed, we see the hoped-for renovation already commenced. If we compare the present condition of Egypt, or Jerusalem, or Smyrna, or Nineveh, with their condition at the commencement of the present century, the extent of their revival will be seen. No doubt it is as yet in its infancy; but it will advance

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respondent of "The Times." It is published in that Journal, November 8th, 1867:—

"Some twelve years ago a French priest, the Abbé Michon, wrote a little pamphlet recommending, as the best means of promoting the unity of Italy, and of satisfying the wishes and requirements of Catholicity, the transfer of the Papacy from Rome to Jerusalem, the cradle of Christianity. The pamphlet attracted some attention at the time, but was soon afterwards forgotten. The subject is again mooted by a gentleman of a liberal and cultivated mind, and who is already known for his writings, principally on ethnological subjects. M. d'Eichthal has addressed a letter to the *Temps* advocating Jerusalem as 'the metropolis of the great Christian society.' It is from Jerusalem, he says, that the Law of the one and universal God was spread over the world. It is there that, in contact with Asia and Europe, Greek civilization, introduced by the successes of Alexander, and Roman civilization, by the legions of Pompey, were found to meet. And it is there that, from the alliance and combination of those three great Powers, at the voice of Jesus, Christianity was founded. In the Middle Ages, while the Jews turned their eyes incessantly towards the Holy City, the Latins, Greeks, and Mussulmans disputed with each other its possession; and it was during that conflict they were preparing themselves by this very contact for higher destinies. In the present day the force of tradition calls to Jerusalem all who, in one form or another, believe in the Bible. While under the tolerant sovereignty of the Sultan the Latin Catholics and the Orthodox Greeks group their chapels round the Holy Sepulchre, while the Protestants instal their Bishop in the Holy City, and the Pope establishes his Legate there, Russia, Austria, France, England, the Israelites multiply their schools

until "the rivers of Cush"—the Nile and the Euphrates, again become the great commercial arteries of the world. Israel with all their intelligence, and wealth, and commercial aptitude (some among them speaking the language of every known people upon earth) will return

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and hospitals. And, at the same time, by the increasing facility of communication, by the vicinity of the Isthmus of Suez, by the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, by Syria and Egypt, new life and vigour are being restored to that spot so long deserted. According as civilization returns towards the East, and penetrates into Africa, Jerusalem, the historical centre, is again becoming the material centre of the world:—

“ Rome has been the capital of militant Christianity. So long as it was a question of the submission of the barbarians, peoples and Kings, who had invaded the West, to the Christian law, it was at Rome that the heads of Western Christianity established their seat. There they had the lessons and the prestige of Italian civilization, and it is thus they were able to fulfil their mission. But now that the work is long since completed, that the barbarians of old are become modern Christian nations, the maintenance of a so-called Christian metropolis at Rome is as opposed to common sense as the maintenance of an unchangeable Catholic dogma is an anachronism. So long as it rules or merely has its seat in Rome, so long as it claims to remain apart from the movement of modern life, and, I venture to say, from the true spirit of Christianity, the Papacy will continue to be isolated and powerless. On the other hand, the day on which it will be sincerely reconciled with the world, associated in its labours, its joys and sorrows, when it shall really turn the religious influence it possesses towards the moral and material well-being of peoples, the day the Papacy shall have made such progress it will understand that it is not at Rome but at Jerusalem that the theatre of its destinies must be fixed. It will at the same time understand on what conditions it may, in this new home, merit the rank it claims of being called the leading representative of Christian faith and thought, and that day also we shall see the end of its struggles with Italy.”

to their land and reconstitute themselves there, with Egypt on their right hand, and Assyria on their left—triple pillars apparently of the world's prosperity. Many when they see it will be ready to say that the days of evil are gone, and the hour of promised prosperity come. They will think that Israel has become "a third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the earth: whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance." Indeed, already this and similar passages in Isaiah have been applied to the present revival of civilization in Egypt. It is infatuation: yet not greater, perhaps, than that that has dictated previous interpretations of this passage. Isaiah has long become a sealed book to Christendom. When conscience slumbers and ceases to distinguish good from evil, Prophecy if read, will only the more deeply blind.\*

And now, although Christendom has given no heed to the lessons of the past, though it seems to think that it has never trodden God's courts unbidden—never offered vain oblations—never held solemn assemblies that have been in God's sight abomination—though it

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\* Thus *Vitringa*, after an elaborate disquisition, comes to the conclusion that "the great Saviour sent by Jehovah to Egypt (see Is. xix. 20) was Alexander the Great:" and that the time when Egypt becomes, with Israel and with Assyria a blessing in the midst of the earth, was when the Ptolemies ruled over it. There are few periods at which Egypt has more been a sink of corruption than under them. Yet even Barnes assents to this interpretation of *Vitringa*!

has failed to discern the parallelism between Israel's past history and its own, will it continue with like indifference to view the future also? Will it close its eyes to the character of that now approaching hour when latitudinarianized Judaism and latitudinarianized Gentilism will unite their energies to revive, not for God, but for Antichristianism and Antichrist, those ancient countries of the East where godless civilization found its birth place, and where for the last time it will concentrate its energies against God? Will Christendom refuse to hear what the Prophets have spoken respecting that coming climax of human evil—that night of which the watchman warns us, saying, “the morning cometh, and also **THE NIGHT**,”—that night for which Christendom has been steadily labouring? Had it not been for Christendom's corruptions, anti-christian lawlessness would never be what it will be.

Christendom, however, will not believe this. It turns a deaf ear to the lessons of the future as well as of the past. A large part of it, therefore, will fall under the full power of that “strong delusion” that is to be sent. Fascinated and deluded by the brightness with which Satan will illumine that coming period (which will be at once the night of truth's sorrow and the day of the unredeemed earth's jubilee) they will be lured on to abandon all that they retain of the knowledge of God, till they give themselves over wholly to the great Deceiver. The early seats of Christianity will be those in which Antichristianism will peculiarly reign.

Let us not then delude ourselves with the thought



that either this chapter or any other chapter that speaks of judgment poured out either on Jerusalem, or Egypt, or Assyria, or Edom, or Tyre, or Damascus, or Moab, is finally accomplished. The judgments which have visited those nations are but incipient and premonitory. The desolations which have been, are but foreshadowings of that which is yet to be. The concluding verse of this first chapter—"the strong shall be as tow, and his work as a spark, and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them," is not yet accomplished, and pertains as much to the apostates out of Christendom as to the apostates of Israel. A common web is being woven by latitudinarianized Gentiles and latitudinarianized Jews, and they will partake of a common doom.

But though the darkness that is coming on will be fearfully comprehensive in its scope, it will not be universal. There shall still be a remnant. Some eyes shall be opened to see: some ears to hear. And when the departed glory of countries long fallen shall for a season be revived and rise from the grave of ages, and men shall exult in the expectation of a new and regenerated age, there shall be some in whose hearts and lips the long-buried testimonies of the Prophets shall revive also. They too shall rise as from the grave and throw the light of heaven on the satanic scene, and guide some through it, in paths of honour, though they may be paths of suffering, on to the glory of the eternal day.

## NOTES ON ISAIAH I.

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### VERSE 1.

*The vision of Isaiah the son of Amos, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, kings of Judah.]* As the vision is said to have extended over the reign of four kings, this verse must be regarded as the preface, not of the first chapter only, but of the whole book.

The vision is expressly said to be "*concerning Judah and Jerusalem.*" Whatever else may be introduced collaterally, they are the especial subjects of the Prophecy. *Jerusalem* is the centre around which the great events of earth revolve. There Christ glorified God: there Antichrist will glorify himself. There Christ was crucified: there Antichrist will be adored. There the curses that come from the unappeased holiness of Sinai have fallen and will fall: there the blessings that come from the appeased holiness of Zion will in due time be made manifest in their fulness.

The meaning of Isaiah's name is "*Jehovah will save.*" Although his prophecy teems with denunciations of coming judgment, yet he was also sent to declare the coming of IMMANUEL—the Rock laid in Zion, and "he that believeth thereon shall not be confounded."

Whatever the darkness, whatever the apostasy, whatever the manifestation of Satan's power, all shall be made to pass away before the might of the name of **IMMANUEL** like darkness before the rising sun—like chaff before the whirlwind. It shall be recognised at last that Jehovah can save.

In all books of prophecy the commencing visions are wide and comprehensive. Accordingly, the first chapter of Isaiah includes all the period of which the Book as a whole treats. It reaches onward to that still future hour, when Zion, purified by judgment, shall have "her judges restored as at the first, and her counsellors as at the beginning." [See verse 25 and 26.] Subsequent visions, therefore, do but retrace the period, or part of the period included in the first chapter. With the exception of one passage which speaks of the creation of "new heavens and a new earth" after the millennial heavens and earth have passed away, none of the subsequent visions extend beyond the period to which the first chapter brings. The like is true of the visions into which the Book of Daniel and the Revelation are divided. As in Isaiah, so in them, the several visions are not to be read as if chronologically successive. They are supplementary one to the other—the later visions retracing, and bringing out with further detail, points to which earlier visions had more briefly referred.

Whenever Prophecy assumes a prominent place in the instructions of God, it is a sure evidence that evil is progressing, and that judgment is near. Samuel's mission preceded the fall of the priestly house of Eli :

Isaiah's mission preceded the fall of the royal house of David. Israel and Judah were neither rightly instructed nor rightly led; or if occasionally they were favoured with right leadership, they resisted. Jotham was a king who would have guided them aright, but they would not follow. [See 2 Chron. xxvii. 2.] There is no greater sign of the whole moral framework of society being diseased than when leadership in good is proposed, but rejected.

After the ten tribes had separated themselves from the House of David and sank into vile idolatry, light, mercy, and protective power lingered long around Jerusalem and Judah, until they too so corrupted themselves that it could be said, "backsliding Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah." Has Protestantism no lesson to learn from this?

It is a too frequent habit of God's people to deceive themselves as to the signs of the times, by fixing their attention so exclusively on the interventions of God's mercy, as to hide from themselves the tokens of the persistency of the advancing evil. Isaiah's mission and Hezekiah's reign were wonderful interventions of God's mercy toward Jerusalem. But did they stop the course of evil? Manasseh's wickedness followed, and the throne of David sank before Babylon. Since then, how many and how diversified have been the interventions of God's mercy in His dealings both with Israel and with Christendom! But the advance of evil, even though occasionally checked, has not been arrested. It is fast progressing towards its maturity, when the

threatened judgment, long suspended, will fall at last, and Isaiah's words be accomplished to the full.

#### VERSES 2 AND 3.

*Hear, O heavens, and give ear O earth: for Jehovah hath spoken, Sons I have nourished and brought up, and they it is who have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.*

*Hear, O heavens, &c.]* The prophecy of Moses in Deut. xxxii. commences with like words. Seven centuries had passed, and now the same appeal is again made to heaven and earth as witnesses against Israel.

Some taking the primary force of the Hebrew words render, "*Sons I have made great and high,*" but it is better to retain the translation given in our version. The point emphasized is the fact of their being "sons," and the tender care that had been extended to them as such.

#### VERSE 4.

*Ah sinning nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers—sons that are corrupters: they have forsaken Jehovah, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they have gone away [or, estranged themselves] backward.*

*Ah sinning nation.]* Observe the force of the present participle as denoting essential condition and habitua-

tion. A people *heavy*, or *weighed down* with iniquity. A seed, i.e. *descendants of evil-doers*. As their fathers were so are they. Sons that are *corrupters of others*, and so perpetuators of iniquity. They have despised the Holy One of Israel, and instead of drawing near to Him that they might acquaint themselves with Him, they have become estranged from Him, and are gone backwards—[*απηλλοτριωθησαν εις τα οπισω. Theodosion and Aquila.*]

VERSE 5.

*Wherefore should ye be stricken any more, ye will add revolt to revolt: the whole\* head is for sickness and the whole heart is strengthless.*

*Why or wherefore should ye be stricken, &c.*] It is better to adopt this translation with Syriac and Sept., and not to render with Vulgate and others—“*on what part,*” or “*where* should ye be stricken any more.” [See use of *למה* in Mal. ii. 14, “yet ye say *wherefore, &c.*”] Of what use is it that ye should be chastened further: your moral disease is so great as to be beyond the power of chastisement. “The whole head is for sickness,” i.e. given up to sickness—“the whole

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\* Be careful *not* to translate with some misled by the omission of the article before *לכל*, *every* head, *every* heart. Compare Is. ix. 11, and Ps. cxi. 1: and see “Occasional Papers,” Vol. I., No. 1, p. 27, for remarks on similar omission of the Greek Article before *πας*, especially in respect of *πασα οικοδομη*, *the whole building*, Eph. ii. 21: and *πασα πατρια*, *the whole family* in Eph. iii. 15.

heart is [רִי] strengthless;" exhausted as when the life-blood has been drained away. See הוֹרֵה whence רִי.

#### VERSE 6.

*From the sole of the foot even to the head there is no soundness in it; it is wound, and stripe, and fresh stroke. They have not been pressed, and they have not been bound, neither has there been any mollifying with ointment.*

Such was their corporate condition morally. They were as one whose body is full both of disease and wound: and all suffered to go on without even an attempt to arrest the progress. Their outward condition was fast becoming like their moral.

#### VERSES 7 AND 8.

*Your land is desolation, your cities are consumed by fire: your ground, before your eyes strangers are its devourers, and it is a desolation like the overthrow of [that which is overthrown by] strangers: and the daughter of Zion is left like a booth in a vineyard, like a lodge in a garden of melons [abandoned when the gathering time is over] like a beleaguered city.*

*Your land is desolation, &c.]* Incipient indications of this coming desolation had been already given. In prophetic Scripture incipency is regarded as the token and pledge of final consummation. Hence the Spirit of God regards the hour of incipency as being *virtually*

the hour of maturity, and speaks accordingly. Hundreds of years intervened between the incipient idolatry of Israel in the wilderness, and the captivity of Babylon, yet see how these two periods are associated in the Acts. "They made a calf in those days . . . . , and I will carry you away beyond Babylon." Acts vii. 41, and Amos v. 26. There were intermediate links, but the two events were as indissolubly associated as are cause and effect. Faith discerns in the incipient form of things features which the world discerns not till the hour of matured development, and it acts accordingly.

#### VERSE 9.

*Except Jehovah of Hosts had left unto us a remnant very small, as Sodom we should have been, unto Gomorrah we should have been like.*

*Except Jehovah, &c.]* The true servants of God have even had to say this. It was so in every past period of Israel's history; it is so still, and so it will be at the close; for though Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet (only) a remnant shall return. Nor is it otherwise in Christendom. It may talk great things about Catholicity and the like, but whilst the way remains broad that leadeth to destruction, Catholicity is but the brand of departure from God. Pan-Anglican, or Pan-Roman, or Pan-Hellenic Synods, the more Catholic they are, the more will they be found to dogmatise *against* Scripture and *against* God. To walk with the multitude is to err. Faith knows that in the midst of that



which *professes* to belong to God, there is but a little remnant that is really His, and with them and for them it counts it all joy to suffer. This remnant is the true treasure for which Christ died. It has ever been the great effort of Satan to harass, mislead, and scatter them : and in this he has succeeded. But he cannot destroy them, for they have a great and faithful Shepherd out of whose hand none shall pluck them. Blessed are they who really seek their welfare by leading them in paths of separateness *according to revealed Truth*. They who are precious as a treasure, should have a certain manifested preciousness and purity like a pearl: but to such purity, Truth only can bring. "Sanctify them by thy truth." Fevered imaginativeness may be mistaken for piety, but it will not guide except to quicksands.

#### VERSES 10 TO 17.

*Hear the word of Jehovah, ye rulers of Sodom, give ear unto the Law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. Wherefore to me [i.e. why bring ye to me] the multitude of your sacrifices, saith Jehovah: I am full of the offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts, and the blood of bullocks, and of lambs, and of he-goats, I desire not. When ye come to appear before me, who required this from your hands to trample [רמס—to tread down or trample as beasts do: see Chron. xxv. 18.] my courts. Ye shall not go on [continue] to bring lying oblation—incense, it is to me abomination—[or, abominable incense is this to me. [So likewise] new-moon feast, and sabbath, and the calling of the assembly. I cannot bear iniquity and solemn meeting.*

*Your new-moon feasts and convocations my soul hateth ; they weigh on me as a burden ; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide my face from you : and when ye multiply prayer, I am one that heareth not, your hands are full of blood [bloods]. Wash you, make you clean ; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes ; cease from evil, learn to do good, seek judgment, right the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow."*

Can Christendom, whether Anglican, or Romanist, or Greek, read these words and not tremble? Has it not made the same attempt to consecrate worldliness—to associate wicked men and wicked deeds with holy words, holy services, holy prayer, as if worldliness and iniquity could be sanctified by sound? Is a loathsome and corrupting corpse made attractive by being adorned with pearls and costly array? Splendour under such circumstances appals because of the contrast. When the discrepancy between holy words and evil deeds is ignored, it argues either the depth of hypocrisy, or else judicial blindness. It may be that the moral sense has been utterly destroyed—the heart may have ceased to feel.

#### VERSES 18 TO 20.

*" Come now, and let us reason together, saith Jehovah ; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow : though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and hearken, the good of the land ye shall eat ; but if ye refuse and rebel, by the sword ye shall be eaten ; for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it."*

*Come now and let us reason together.*] Whether words of proposed mercy, such as these, become in result words of blessing, may be determined by the manner in which they who are addressed regard the "IF" by which the concluding clause is prefaced. "IF ye be willing and obey, &c." Man blind to his own impotence, is ever ready to take the responsibility of that "if" upon himself. He is ready to accept the condition of earning his title to blessing *by making himself* willing and obedient. But to take on ourselves such a responsibility is destruction. The wise in heart know this. They sicken at the thought of such a responsibility: knowing their utter impotence they cast themselves wholly on the grace of God to receive them freely, just as they are, for Christ's sake, and to give them repentance and remission of sins, and to work in them that which is well-pleasing in His sight. So God becomes God our Saviour. Every responsibility as regards that which is needed for salvation is devolved upon Him. We are the clay: He the potter.

That awful "if"—awful and destructive to those who discern not what is involved in it, was first heard by Israel when they entered on their wilderness-sojourn and encamped at Marah. There Jehovah made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there He proved them and said, "IF thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of Jehovah thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought on the

Egyptians ; for I am Jehovah that healeth thee." Exodus xv. 26. At Sinai, Israel formally took upon themselves the responsibility of meeting that IF. They said, we will be willing and obedient ; so will we earn ; so will we keep our blessings. Blind to their own impotence, they undertook to do that which Immanuel only could do—obey with the perfectness of heaven. Notwithstanding every lesson that has age after age been given, the delusion has deepened on them, and rests on them in all its intensity still. In vain has the justifying righteousness of Immanuel been preached. In vain has it been declared to them that He has been exalted "as a Prince and a Saviour TO GIVE repentance to Israel and remission of sins." They refuse repentance and salvation as a GIFT, and still say that they will earn every blessing for themselves. Therefore, instead of being willing and obedient they remain unwilling and disobedient, and perish in their sins. Nor will it be otherwise, until they shall discern that they are neither willing nor able to turn themselves unto God, and shall in self-renunciation cry to Him and say, "Turn THOU me and I shall be turned ; . . . . Surely *AFTER* that I was turned, I repented ; and *AFTER* that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh." Jer. xxxi. 18. See also their repentant words in Isaiah xxvi. 12. "Jehovah, THOU wilt appoint peace for us, for all our works also THOU HAST WROUGHT FOR US"—פַּעַלְתָּ לָנוּ \* Then at last they recognise the distinc-

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\* For a similar use of ל as meaning for, or on behalf of, see Psalm cxxiv. 1—"unless Jehovah had been for us, &c."

tion between the New Covenant of grace, and the first covenant of Law that worketh death.

I have already observed that although Christendom professes to recognise this distinction, yet with the Apostles all clear apprehension of it passed away. We cannot say that one of the early Fathers have given or were able to give a clear exposition of the difference of the first and second Covenant as traced in the eighth of the Hebrews. See for example the comment of Theodoret on that chapter, and I know no writer of that period who came nearer to an apprehension of the Gospel than he.\*

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\* *Theodoret* lived in the fifth century. In commenting on Heb. viii. 6—"But now hath He obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also He is the Mediator of a better Covenant which is established upon better promises," Theodoret observes: "he [the Apostle] concisely points out what the supreme excellency (of the New Covenant) is. For the Old Covenant had appended to it promises of corporeal blessings—a land flowing with milk and honey—a land of olives and vineyards—a multitude of children, and such like. But the New promises eternal life and the kingdom of heaven." This was Theodoret's notion of the difference between the Covenant of Law working death, and the Covenant of grace bringing life. It is evident that he had utterly failed in apprehending all that the Apostle had written in the Galatians respecting Hagar and Sarah—Sinai and Zion. Nor is it true that the First Covenant had appended to it earthly promises *only*, or that the New Covenant, when Israel are brought under it, will be unattended by earthly blessings. If any *could* have kept the Law *perfectly* it would have brought to them eternal life. The words of Scripture are express: "the man that hath done them (viz., the things written in the Law) SHALL LIVE by them." [*ὁ ποιήσας αὐτὰ ἀνθρώπος ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς.* Deut. xxi. 23, as quoted in Gal. iii. 12.] And again, Jesus said,

The power of Christianity is gone when the difference between the first and second Covenant is not apprehended. When Moses came down from Sinai, what was he commissioned to present to Israel? Tables on which were written the requirements of God's holiness. Israel gazed on them; but did they find in them sal-

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“This do, and thou shalt LIVE.” It is utterly untrue, therefore, that eternal life was not *proposed* under the Law. God never designed under any Covenant to give earthly blessings *only*. Accordingly, when Israel shall at last have the veil taken from their heart, and when they shall be brought under the New Covenant and “be blessed in basket and in store; blessed in their going out and coming in,” they shall likewise have fulness of spiritual blessing (even as we now have) in heavenly places in Christ risen: and shall look onward to the time when they shall join their brethren, “the Church of the first-born ones” in new heavens and a new earth, where all will be in the perfect likeness of the Second Man, the Last Adam.

Theodoret, therefore, is doubly in error. The distinction that he supposes to exist between the two Covenants does *not* exist: and the vital distinction that does exist, he apprehends not. For the distinction is this. The first Covenant, whilst it proposed eternal life as the *end*, left it to man to provide the means, which he could not: whereas, under the New Covenant, God undertakes to provide both means and end. He *gives* remission of sins and newness of heart. He preserves in Christ Jesus as well as calls. “Whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” All is of God. He becomes the Alpha and Omega of salyation.

Yet Theodoret, though we cannot say that his views of gospel truth were either full or clear, had not learned with modern Christendom to deify and worship *bread*; nor to pretend that any sacrifice save the one sacrifice once offered on the Cross, is needed for the everlasting remission of sin. “One and the same Person” [i.e. Jesus] says Theodoret, “is both Priest and Victim, and hath

vation or life? No. They found destruction. "The letter [that is the written precept—*το γράμμα*] kills," for that which was there written embodied the claims of the Divine holiness, and those claims they could not meet, and therefore there remained for them curse and death. But when the Apostles as ministers of the

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accomplished the expiation of sins, and needs no other ministration, (*λειτουργίας*) but sits with the Father who begat Him, expecting, &c." Then quoting the words, "Now where remission of these is there is no more offering for sin," he adds: "for this," i.e. continuation of sacrifice, "is superfluous after remission has been granted." *Theodoret on Heb. x.* In speaking of the Supper of the Lord, he says, "To those who are instructed in Divine things, it is manifest that we offer not another sacrifice, but celebrate the memorial of that sacrifice which is one and saving. For our Master Himself enjoined this unto us, 'Do this in remembrance of me,' in order that by contemplation we might call to remembrance the character of the sufferings incurred for our sake, and kindle the flame of love around our benefactor, and await the enjoyment of the good things that are to come." *Theodoret on Heb. viii.*

Modern statements on this subject contrast very unfavourably with these words of Theodoret. Take, for example, the words recently adopted by the Pan-Anglican Synod—"Seek in faith for oneness with Christ in the blessed Sacrament of His body and blood"—strange words, surely, from those who should have denounced as damnable and soul-destroying the doctrine of Transubstantiation and its attendant idolatry, and the doctrine of a sacrificing Priesthood sacrificing atoningly for the living and the dead. Besides, how can believers be taught "to seek for" that which they already have. Believers, from the first moment they believe, *have* union with Christ; and they neither seek it nor attain it in the Sacrament. Such words as the foregoing could not be used by any who really apprehend what the Scripture teaches respecting "the Supper of the Lord." The broken bread and the wine symbolise His body *broken* and His blood *shed*.

New Covenant come forth to us from God, what are they commissioned to present to us? They present Christ—Christ crucified—Christ as the one finished sacrifice. They bid us look to One who has accomplished a work that brings everlasting forgiveness of sins to all who believe: One also in whom quickening

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The symbolic bread and wine do not direct our souls to any relation of His glorified resurrection body unto us, nor to any virtue thence communicated. They refer not to Christ in His present life, but to Christ in His past death. They refer, as did the Paschal Lamb "roast with fire," to Christ *as the Sacrifice*—that which He was once, and only once. "In that He died, He died unto sin once." The Father "hath reconciled you [believers] *in the body of Christ's flesh through death* [not Christ's resurrection glorified body] to present you holy, &c., in His sight." Colos. i. 22. On the past sacrificial death of Christ, not on His present life, our justification rests. The Lord's Supper is intended to guard the great doctrine of our justification. It brings before us the remembrance of that broken body and shed blood, whereby we are enabled to say that our sins and iniquities are remembered no more. It teaches us that SACRIFICE (the one sacrifice of Calvary) SAVETH. Immanuel by His obedience unto death *satisfied*, once and for ever all the claims of God's governmental holiness. He bore in the stead of His people every appointed penalty, He presented in their stead His own perfect obedience unto God. We feed on Him as the *slain* Lamb.

There is, in the Lord's Supper, no presence in any sense whatsoever of His body once broken, or of His blood once shed. The memorial of it is before us, but it is a memorial only. If the symbols before us cause our souls to look back to and to rest on His atoning work, the observance of the Lord's Supper is blessed to us: but if our souls are not carried back to His *death*, but diverted unto some imaginative and false notion respecting virtue communicated from His glorified body, or any other kindred figment, the Lord's Supper becomes to us a snare, and we turn our blessings into a curse.



power of life is, so that all who look to Him in faith receive new and heavenly life and have, created in them "the new man," whereby the Law becomes written in their hearts. Thus both the promises of the New Covenant are fulfilled—"their sins and iniquities I will remember no more:" and "I will write my law upon their hearts"—there to remain for ever. God makes Himself our God: He makes us His people. "I WILL BE their God: they SHALL BE my people." AH is the result of His own efficacious power whereby He justifies and quickens, preserves and glorifies; that so we might ever say, "OF him, and THROUGH him, and UNTO him are all things, to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

*But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall by the sword be eaten.*] Israel has rejected, and continues to refuse, and rebel. They will once more (and that probably very soon) return, whilst yet in unbelief, to their own land. Assyria re-strengthened and re-civilized, will be on one side of them: Egypt on the other. For a season they will flourish in seeming prosperity: but Assyria under a more terrible head than Sennacherib or Nebuchadnezzar, will again be their scourge, and "trample them down as the mire of the streets," until the hour shall come for Jehovah to arise unto judgment and to smite both the oppressed and the oppressor, sparing, however, in Israel, a remnant who shall be made "a strong nation."

There are three great periods of Jerusalem's iniquity described in Scripture: the first is that during which

Isaiah and the first Prophets testified. This period ended with the captivity of Babylon. The second period was that in which the later Prophets, JESUS, and the Apostles testified. It ended with the captivity and destruction of Jerusalem by Rome. The third and yet future period is that in which Israel, unrepentant and unbelieving, shall re-gather themselves to their land, there to give themselves over to, and ultimately to become the prey of, ANTICHRIST. This last period whilst it will include all the characteristic features of their former iniquities will develop more. "The transgressors will then have come to the full." Former periods are as "the green tree:" this will be as "the dry."

Satan has wonderfully triumphed in deceiving us into the belief that the iniquities of Israel and the judgments thereon as described in the Prophets are a tale of the past: whereas the past is but a foreshadowing, and a faint foreshadowing of that which is to be. And what is more, a large part of Christendom, specially that part of it in which we dwell, will be the great agent in making Jerusalem what it will be, and Assyria what it will be, and Egypt what it will be in the coming day of visitation. The generation in which we live are very distinctly setting themselves against revealed Truth, and are weaving a web that will entangle both Israel and themselves, and drag them into the abyss of Antichristianism. Men are imputing to Truth the responsibility of results that have flowed from their own abuse and prostitution of Truth, and are thus doubly outraging God.

## VERSES 21 TO 23.

*How hath she become a Harlot, the City of faithfulness! Full she was of judgment [justice]: righteousness dwell in her, but now murderers. Thy siloer is become dross: thy wine ruined by water. Thy princes are rebels and companions of thieves: each one of them is the lover of a bribe and the seeker after recompence: the fatherless they judge not, and the cause of the widow cometh not unto them.*

*How hath she become a harlot, &c.]* This description, however verified in Israel's past history, will yet again be true of them with heightened features. Ritualistic Christendom has not fallen short of Israel in these things.

## VERSES 24 TO 28.

*Therefore saith the Lord, Jehovah of Hosts, the Mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of [literally, comfort myself from] mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies. And I will cause my hand to return upon thee, and I will purge out thy dross thoroughly and will take away all thine alloy, and I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: after this thou shalt be called, [literally, it shall be called to thee] The city of Righteousness, the Fortress of Faithfulness. Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness. And the crushing [breaking] of transgressors and of sinners shall be together and the forsakers of Jehovah shall come to an end.*

*Ah, I will ease me, &c.]* The fulfilment of this is future. He has not yet so turned His hand upon Zion as to purge her from all her alloy, nor has He “restored her judges as at the first, and her counsellors as at the beginning.” Transgression must first come to its full in Jerusalem and be “crushed,” so that it may never again dominate. This will not be till the great Head of Israel reveals Himself in glory. He will rend the heavens and come down.

*The crushing or breaking, &c.]* Compare Jer. xix. 11. “Even so will I *break* this people as one *breaketh* a potter’s vessel.” The word rendered “transgressors”—**פְּשָׁעִים** denotes rebelliousness, revolt, defection, and is stronger than **חַטָּאִים**, *sinners*. See Job xxxiv. 37. “He addeth *rebellion* unto his sin.” Men may sin against God whilst they still acknowledge Him and His laws: but rebels openly reject Him. “The forsakers of Jehovah,” is an expression that denotes apparently complete apostasy. They will avowedly abandon Jehovah for another.

#### VERSE 29.

*For they shall be ashamed from [i.e. shame shall come to them from] the oaks which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded from [confusion shall come to you from] the gardens ye have chosen. For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf withereth, and as a garden that hath no water. And the strong shall become tow, and his work a spark, and they shall burn both together, and there is no one that quenqueth.*

*For they shall be ashamed, &c.]* Such is the result of all that modern civilization is about to do in reviving the land of Israel. Strength and beauty may be there—many a mighty oak, and many a lovely garden; but what are strength and beauty apart from God? From the very things that they have desired and delighted in, shame and confusion of face will come. All shall suddenly dry up and wither. Men's works shall be as fire burning against them consumingly; and they themselves shall be as *tow*; ready, meet for the burning. How awful this picture! It is soon to be verified in many a Gentile and many a Jew.

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*It has been and will be my endeavour to make the translation proposed by me, strictly literal. Such a translation will of course lack the symmetry and beauty of one less exact, especially if an attempt be made to preserve the order of the words of the original. I have consulted the works of many translators, ancient and modern, and have freely availed myself of their suggestions, when they have seemed to me correct. Among these I may mention the work of the late Dr. Alexander, of Princeton, America, edited by Dr. Eadie. This I value most of any critical work on Isaiah that I have seen. Whilst altogether repudiating conjectural emendations of the Hebrew text, I do not defer always to the accentuation nor to the pointing of the printed editions—neither the accentuation nor the pointing being of Divine authority.*

## THOUGHTS ON ISAIAH II.

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THE Teachers of Israel have been accustomed (and rightly) to divide the history of this Adamic earth into two parts. The first (called by them "this age" עולם הזה, *αιων οὗτος*) is that lengthened and still continuing period of sorrow and evil, which, commencing from the Flood, has already measured nearly six thousand years: the second is that yet future period when the Messiah of Israel shall take to Himself His great power and reign, (Dan. vii. 14. Rev. xi. 15.) and Jerusalem the City of the great King, be made the centre of the Earth for government, instruction, and blessing. This they call, and so does the Apostle, "the age to come," עולם הבא, *ὁ μέλλων αιων*. Heb. vi. 5.\*

It would have been well for us if our apprehensions of the earth's present evil, and of the means necessary for its subjugation, had been as true and as vivid as those of the saints in Israel. Feebly have our hearts recognised

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\* See the use of *ἡ γενεα αὐτη* in Matt. xxiv. 34. [This generation shall not pass &c.] as contrasted with "the generation to come" in Ps. cii. 18. "This shall be written for the generation to come, and the people that shall be created shall praise the Lord."

the present dominancy of evil. We discern not the extent of the earth's moral distance from God : we hear not the general groan of creation : and when the Scripture speaks of the wild "forest" (which man looks on as his vineyard) being cut down, and of "Lebanon" (the symbol of the earth's present glory) "falling by a Mighty One," we marvel and ask what these things mean? The night of evil has been so illumined by the lurid fires that men have kindled to relieve its gloom, that even God's people have in great measure failed to apprehend the darkness. They discern distinctly neither the darkness nor the judgment that is to fall thereon, nor the blessedness and joy of the coming Day.

Yet the deliverance of earth from the dominancy of evil and the subsequent reign of the great Melchisedek, are subjects to which exceeding prominence is given both in the Old and in the New Testament. In the earliest of the songs of Israel at the Red Sea, the overthrow of Pharaoh and his hosts is regarded as the foreshadowing and the pledge of the final triumph of the Lord over all the Pharaoh-like power of earth; and when "the Church of the first-born ones" enter into their glory and stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God, that song will again be found on their lips; for the hour of its true accomplishment will *then* have come. They will "sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of nations ( $\delta$  βασιλευς των εθνων). Who shall not fear,

O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy, (*οσιος*, *קדוש*) for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments have been made manifest." Rev. xv. The Book of Psalms teems with descriptions of the putting down of the earth's evil before the power of the coming day of glory: and the first recorded Alleluiah of the saints in Heaven is a thanksgiving to Him who "judged the great whore that did corrupt the earth by her fornication, and avenged the blood of His servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever." Rev. xix. 2. Little communion have we at present with thoughts like these. Our apprehension of the character of the workings of Satan and the extent of the constructions of his evil are so feeble, that we recognise not the need for that "roar" of the Lion of Judah that shall cause them all to crumble, and be as though they had not been. That very act of the Lord our God that shall at last call forth the earliest and twice repeated Alleluia of the saints in glory is at present well nigh utterly disregarded. It is neither hoped for nor expected.

Unnumbered examples of God's patient goodness in bestowing blessing are afforded by the world's past history. Again and again, has He opened channels of goodness, and caused to flow therein many a deep stream of mercy. But no sooner does He give, than man's wilfulness and evil interpose, and the mercy given is either perverted or despised. It is needful, therefore, not only that God should give, but that He should



GOVERN. It is needful that He should watch over and effectually control the diffusion of that which He gives : that He should cut off disturbing agencies, and, under the supervision of His own almighty power, carry out to their proper results His purposes of good. For this faith waits. For this we say, "Thy kingdom come: thy will be done in earth as it is done in heaven."

No one apprehended these things more fully than David. He had the heart of a King. He saw that what the earth needed was control—constant, minute control in things little and great; and he knew that such control could only come from Him by whom the earth was created and by whom it is sustained. He knew also that God had appointed that the right government of the world should depend on the right regulation of Israel, and that the right regulation of Israel depended on there being provided for them a Head of whom it could be said in all truthfulness, that He was "righteous; ruling in the fear of God." David had earnestly striven to rule Israel aright. He had longed to bring them into a right relation to God that they might be both blessed and made a blessing. But he had failed. He had failed personally, and he had failed officially: and with his dying lips he confessed his failure. He had not succeeded in regulating aright even his own house—much less Israel—still less the nations. "My house," said he, "is not so with God: yet hath He made with me an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure . . . although He make it not to grow." Certainly, as regards Israel and the

earth, the covenant has not even yet been made to grow : but David's hopes will not finally be disappointed. There is One belonging to his House, whose coming shall be both to the earth and to Israel " as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds ; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain. But the sons of Belial shall be all of them as thorns thrust away . . . they shall be utterly burned with fire in the same place." Such were the dying words of the sweet Psalmist of Israel ; and they shall be fulfilled in their season.

In *the closing part* of the chapter before us, we find the description of that coming day of visitation that shall finally overwhelm " the sons of Belial " and all the constructions of their evil. In *the commencement* of the chapter, on the other hand, we have the description of the reign of righteousness and peace that is to follow. We are taught *first* respecting that which is, in fulfilment, *last*. The order of narration inverts the order of accomplishment. It is the method of God's graciousness in teaching His servants whom He loves. He tells them of the happy and blessed end before He instructs them respecting the evil that is to precede, that so they might enter on the path of sorrow fortified and cheered by the sure knowledge of the resulting glory.

Faith, therefore, ever holds fast the words " IT SHALL COME TO PASS IN THE LAST DAYS "—that is to say, in the last period of the history of this Adamic earth, (*before* " the dispensation of the fulness of times "—when new heavens and a new earth shall be created), it shall come

to pass even in this fallen earth, that the power of evil shall be abased, darkness give place to light, falsehood to Truth, man be made to bow, and Jehovah alone be exalted. "It shall be, in the last days, that the mountain of the house of Jehovah shall be established in the top of the mountains, and be exalted above the hills, and there shall flow unto it all the Gentiles."

The House of Jehovah is the dwelling-place of Truth. There Truth abides; thence Truth emanates. At present Truth has no such dwelling-place *in earth*. It is a pilgrim—a persecuted exile: despised—hated—seeking it may be, a refuge in caves and dens of the earth, and finding perhaps not even that. No mountain of strength devotes its power to its sustainment or protection. Lebanon and Bashan dominate now; and Lebanon and Bashan are not Zion. Zion is forsaken, desolate, abased: and man's unregenerate strength wielded by Gentile hands prevails. But it shall not always be so. The hour of Zion's glory will come at last, when in token of its lasting governmental supremacy it shall be established high above all the other hills and mountains that shall then stand round about (see Ps. cxxv. 2.) Jerusalem, and become the acknowledged governmental centre of the earth. Of old, the glory of God was manifested on Sinai. There once He legislated for Israel under the first Covenant; but in the last days His glory shall rest on Zion, whence He will govern Israel and the earth under the second Covenant. He will there watch over His "House"—the home and dwelling-place of Truth in the earth. He will watch also over His City

(for Jerusalem shall be the City of the great King) and over His Land which shall be made the joy of all lands—a praise and a blessing in the earth. Zion shall be the gathering place of all nations where they shall seek and receive light, guidance, protection, blessing. “Many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, unto the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem.” Unity, catholicity, authority, infallibility (not counterfeit but true) shall characterize the new position that Truth shall then hold on Zion. It shall be the place of centralized light and centralized power, whence all nations shall be enlightened, regulated, controlled. It will be this, because it will be the seat of the government of Christ, the King as well as the God of Israel. “The sun shall be confounded and the moon ashamed when Jehovah of Hosts shall reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously.” Heaven indeed will still be His home. It did not cease to be His home when His glory was of old displayed on Sinai; nor will it cease to be His home when His glory shall, in the latter day, rest on Zion.

What should we think of one who affirmed that he was dwelling in Eden like Adam before he sinned; or that he was seated on the throne of Solomon’s glory? Yet are they less deluded who say that they occupy the place of Zion in its glory? If so, where are the tokens? Do we see any glory before which the sun is

confounded and the moon ashamed? Do we see Israel walking in the light of the Lord? Do we see the nations gathering themselves to Jerusalem that they might there learn the law of Jehovah? Do we see them beating their swords into ploughshares and learning war no more? Do we see Truth and Righteousness established in the earth, and God alone exalted? Not one of these things do we find. Not one of the tokens needful to sustain the preposterous claim can be found. On the contrary, the earth is covered with darkness. Falsehood reigns. Israel is blinded. Immanuel's land is desolate. God is dishonoured: Satan exalted. They who assume to themselves the place of Zion, do, by the very fact of the claim, show that they know nothing of the real nature of the glory that is to come. They can never have estimated the earth's present evil, or apprehended the character of that coming day of visitation by which alone that evil will be removed. Yet to be ignorant of these things, is to be ignorant of well nigh all that God has revealed with the view of causing us to apprehend the darkness of the present, and the light of the future. It is to be feared that an eye that discerns not these things, neither recognises darkness as darkness, nor light as light. Samson, as soon as he lost his Nazarite separation, was blinded. His eyes were put out; his power of service to the Lord ceased; and he was put into the prison-house to grind for the Philistines. Such, or worse, must be the condition of those who despise the separating power of Truth, (all Truth separates,) and refuse to be Nazarites in this day of evil.

Almost in its earliest days, Gentile Christianity, becoming wise in its own conceit, began to boast itself against Israel; nevertheless, while the Apostles continued to minister, the evil was checked and the consequences averted. But as soon as the Apostles died, the Churches lapsed. They lost their separation, sank into union with the world, and were no longer counted worthy to be represented by that honoured symbol, "candlesticks of gold," by which their early condition was denoted—while as yet they truly shone as lamps of the sanctuary in the midst of the world's darkness. The being disowned by God as lamps of His sanctuary, was the first great crisis in the history of the Gentile Churches; yet Gentile Christianity at that moment of its punishment and degradation, instead of humbling itself, exalted itself the more, and shamelessly claimed for itself the authority and the glory reserved for Zion and Jerusalem in "the last days." One might have supposed that the words with which the chapter before us opens, are so unquestionably declarative of blessings reserved for *Zion and Jerusalem*, as to be proof against evasion or perversion; yet even in these verses one of the early Fathers, Cyril, discovers a prophecy not of Israel's blessing, but of the taking away of God's Word from them!!\* So soon did the light of professing

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\* I say this on the authority of Vitrings, who says: "Plane repudiamus illum ingenii lusum, qui occurrit inter alias meditationes apud Cyrillum, acsi dicere vellet *Vates, Gentes fidem Verbi Evangelii suscepisse, quia Verbum Dei egressum est ex Tsione, hoc est egrediendo ex Tsione καταλειπει την Σιών*. Alienissi-

Christianity begin to be turned into darkness. "If the light that is in you be darkness, how great is that darkness."

Constantine and his flatterers, of course welcomed the thought of being exalted into the place of Zion, and so did Papal Rome. The Catechism of Pope Pius IV. would not have even the semblance of support from Scripture, apart from its perversion of millennial texts. Throughout it, the promises made to Jerusalem in the day of her future glory are shamelessly appropriated to Rome. Nor has Protestantism escaped the snare. Its various sections have been fond of claiming for themselves the standing of Jerusalem, and of dignifying the centres around which they respectively gather, by the name of Zion. Although the unity, and light, and holiness, and power, and glory, that are to characterize Zion are all wanting, and although all the results that are to follow Zion's exaltation are absent—although nations instead of learning war no more, bristle with arms; and instead of bowing before the Truth of God, rebel more and more against it—notwithstanding all this, the delusion is pertinaciously persisted in, and the falsified songs of the future hour of Zion's glory are sung in the day when both Zion and the Truth are in degradation and reproach.

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*mum id est a scopo, et illi recte contrarium.*" Vitringa does not say whether he refers to Cyril of Jerusalem or to Cyril of Alexandria, nor does he give any reference. I have examined with the help of an index the passages where it might be supposed that the statement would occur, but I have not been able to find it.

It is no excuse for this to say, that the Truth made known to believers now is the same Truth that will by and by be established on Zion, and that in that sense we have *anticipatively* the blessings of the age to come. It is no doubt true that believers (who be it remembered are but a "little flock") have the *spiritual* blessings of the millennium, and in this sense the millennium is forestalled. The millennial saints and ourselves have one God, one Father, one Saviour, one Sacrifice, one Spirit, one hope. That which saves from the flesh and its ruin now, will save from the flesh and its ruin when the millennium comes. Christ is the one Head under whom, and in whom all the redeemed of every dispensation will *finally* be united together in the new heavens and new earth, there constituting one glorified body—the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. There are not two gospels, or two ways, or two ends of salvation. But are we because of similarities to forget contrasts? In the coming age, the *external* circumstances of God's people will be in harmony with their spiritual condition. All will be blessing. But *now* it is direfully otherwise. Creation groans. Israel is blinded. Satan, as the god of this age, controls the social and governmental arrangements of the world. Truth and its servants are despised. Christendom, the professed witness of Truth, is corrupt. The true servants of God are few, feeble, and divided. Antichrist is about to be revealed; and the Lord Jesus, because rejected by the earth, is seated on the throne of the Father, waiting till His enemies be set as a footstool



for His feet. In a word, it is now the day of man, and the day of the Lord has not yet come. Is there no difference between the position occupied by Truth and its servants now, and that which will be occupied when the day of the Lord shall have come ?

If we apprehend not the character of the future day of righteousness and peace, we shall equally fail in apprehending the character of the present evil and the judgment which is about to fall thereon. He who rejects the testimony of the first part of this chapter as to the coming blessing, will equally reject its closing testimony as to the coming hour of visitation. Blindness as to these two things must involve blindness, more or less, as to every path of service, and every branch of Truth. We shall look with complacency upon the oaks of Bashan, and the high towers and fenced walls, and on all that wherewith man in the day of his pride hath overspread the earth, and rest and rejoice in the very things which are bringing on the great day of visitation. We shall mistake the hour of the triumph of Satan for the day when the Lord alone shall be exalted. How then can we understand the Scripture ? Must it not become a sealed book to us ? Must we not cease to have communion with the thoughts of God ?

## NOTES ON ISAIAH II.

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### VERSE 1.

*The word that Isaiah the son of Amos saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.]* The two succeeding chapters, as well as the second, are prefaced by this verse. It might seem quite superfluous to say that Judah and Jerusalem mean Judah and Jerusalem; yet if that had been remembered, Rome would never have been able to deceive as she has done by appropriating this, and like texts, to herself. She has wished to be *supreme* in the earth. She has said, "Kings shall be *my* nursing fathers and their queens *my* nursing mothers: they shall bow down with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of *my* feet."

Nothing but a clear apprehension of the difference between the present and the next dispensation, can enable us rightly to estimate this claim. They who believe that secular power is so essentially distinct from ecclesiastical that there never can be a union of both in the same person, will regard the attempt of the Church of Rome to unite them as an act of folly to be despised and ridiculed, rather than to be seriously resisted. Whereas, others who believe that it would be a right and happy thing for the same hand that controls the

worship and order of the Church to regulate also the order of civil and social life—who see that Truth ought to be *supreme*, and that the Scripture speaks of a time when Zion and its Priest-king shall govern all nations, are always predisposed (unless they understand the character of the millennial age) to acquiesce, either partially or altogether, in the rightness of the course which Rome has followed. The first are in danger of becoming Infidels—the last superstitious Romanists.

The system of the Church of Rome is skilfully constructed on a millennial model. Claiming to be the Mother and Mistress of all Churches, its earthly Head sits as a crowned priest upon his throne. He is saluted as God. Rome, because the place of his Throne, is the centre of all authority in the earth. He is surrounded by priests brought into nearer relation to God and to himself than the congregation who stand before him and receive his blessing. His sentence is infallible and irreversible. He has divine authority to alter laws and to forgive sins. He deposes and raises up kings and governs kingdoms, and the like. The claim put forward by the High-priest of Rome to the possession of this power is of course blasphemous; but the authority thus falsely claimed is an authority which the earth really needs, and which will in due time be exercised by Jesus, the Son of the living God. For He who is now sitting (because rejected by Israel) upon His Father's throne, will soon sit *also* upon His own throne, even the throne of His father David. He will be saluted as God—"thy throne, O God, is for ever and

ever." Jerusalem, because the place of His *earthly* throne, will be the centre of all authority in the earth. He will be surrounded by priests, even His risen saints, brought by resurrection into nearer\* relation to God and to Himself than the congregation of Israel who stand before Him as His earthly people to receive His blessing. His sentence will be infallible. He will have divine authority to alter laws and to forgive sins. He will control and raise up kings and govern kingdoms. His throne will be a centre of unity to the whole earth. Satan well knows that these things are in the Scripture: he knows that they are demanded by the need of man, and therefore when raising up a lamp of his own into the place of the lamp of God, he wisely sets it in a position that *seems* to command the testimony of Scripture on its behalf. I say he has *wisely* done this, for he knows the ignorance that prevails as to the Word of God: he knows the carelessness with which Scripture is read: he knows that if the absence of all moral, and spiritual, and outward tokens that mark the true Candlestick of God be undiscerned or unheeded, false applications of Scripture will be sure to pass undetected. The tendency of the human heart to welcome anything whereby it is exalted, facilitates the delusion. The result of this misapplication of Scripture is the destruction of well-nigh every practical principle that God desires to be exhibited in His Church. Until the hour when Christ

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\* This distinction between the millennial saints on earth and the risen saints will not be perpetual. In the new heavens and the new earth all the redeemed will form one glorified body.

shall take His seat upon His own throne, the moral glory of the Church entirely depends on its being found in the path of suffering, affliction, and patience. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews is intended to show the universal character of the family of faith from Abel until the day of millennial blessing shall commence. They were all strangers and sojourners—sufferers, “of whom the world was not worthy.” But the perverted use of millennial Scripture tends to change the sufferer into a king, causes us to reign before the time, and seeks to give to the Bride, the Lamb’s wife, the place which, by God’s appointment, is at present occupied by that ten-horned Beast whose body is to be given to the burning flame as soon as “the sovereignty of the world becomes the sovereignty of our Lord and of His Christ.” The path of Protestantism would not have been what it has been, if it had duly recognised, that, in the present dispensation, the secular greatness of earth is as antagonistic to Truth as the ecclesiastical. Herod and Pilate are not nearer Christ than Caiaphas.

Indeed the secular power is to lead in that last great Apostasy that is to enthrone itself on Zion. Anti-christ as the great Monarch of *ἡ οἰκουμένη*—the whole Roman World, will glorify himself there. See Dan. xi. 45. If therefore we should see the hearts of men gradually withdraw their allegiance from ancient ecclesiasticism, and transfer it to a new system which latitudinarian Judaism and Gentilism will cherish and plant in Jerusalem, we need not marvel. It is a preparation for the end. Latitudinarianism may prate for a

season about Zion as the mountain of God, and like Rome may seek to cloke its deceivableness under holy words. But the veil will soon be cast aside. God and His Scripture will be renounced, and the open Blasphemer of God (there will no longer be the pretence of vice-regency) will sit on Zion "showing himself that he is God." However awful, therefore, it may be to hear the words of Isaiah appropriated by Rome, it will yet be more awful to hear them applied to a system, which with fair pretensions as to philanthropy, human brotherhood and the like, is to culminate in Antichrist.

VERSES 2 TO 5.

*"And it shall be, in the end of the days, that the Mountain of the House of Jehovah shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and there shall flow unto it all the Gentiles: and many peoples shall go and say, Come ye and let us go up to the Mountain of Jehovah, to the House of the God of Jacob, and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths, for out of Zion shall go forth the Law and the Word of Jehovah from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations and shall rebuke many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O House of Jacob, come ye and let us walk in the light of Jehovah."*

*And it shall be in the end of the days.]* I have already observed that the Jews are accustomed to divide the history of the Adamic earth into two periods,

“*this age*” (עולם הזה, *αιων οὗτος*), and “*the age to come*.” (עולם הבא, *ὁ μελλων αιων*). The Scripture fully sanctions this distinction, and frequently contrasts the two periods. Thus the Apostle in the Hebrews speaks of “*the age to come*” *ὁ μελλων αιων*, Heb. vi. 5: and of *ἡ οικουμενη ἡ μελλουσα*—“*the habitable earth to come*,” Heb. ii. 5, into which God will again bring the first-begotten from the dead, saying “*Let all the angels of God worship him*.” Heb. i. 6. This coming period, seeing that it is the last in the history of this Adamic earth is called by the Apostle “*the last time*” [“*who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time*”—*εν εσχατω καιρω* 1 Pet. i. 5]. See also the expression several times used by our Lord in John vi. when speaking of the resurrection of His saints—“*I will raise him up in the last day*”—*εν τη εσχατη ημερα*. The expression used in the passage before us—“*end of the days*” (rendered by the Sept. “*in the last days*,” *εν ταις εσχαις ημεραις*) is equivalent in meaning to those just quoted from Peter and from John. It is very frequently used in the Old Testament to denote the millennial period, or as the Jews would express it, “*the days of the Messiah*,” because those days will conclude the history of this *Adamic* earth.\*

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\* See for example the following passages:

Numbers xxiv. 14. “*Come and I will advertise thee what this people (Israel) shall do to thy people (Moab) in the end of the days.*”

Jer. xxiii. 20. “*The anger of the Lord shall not return, until*

*The mountain of the house of Jehovah.*] An appellation of Zion, either because the Temple stood thereon (Moriah being regarded as a part of Zion) or else because it is the place where the glory of God will be made manifest (as for a season it was on Sinai,) to watch over that House and its interests. How little the solemn

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he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart: *in the end of the days* ye shall consider it perfectly."

Jer. xlvi. 47. "Yet will I bring again the captivity of Moab *in the end of the days*, saith the Lord."

Ez. xxxviii. 16. "And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be *in the end of the days* &c."

Hosea iii. 5. "Afterward shall the children of Israel return . . . . and shall fear the Lord and his goodness *in the end of the days*."

Micah iv. 1. "But it shall be *in the end of the days* that the mountain of the house of Jehovah shall be established &c."

This expression, "end of the days" is not to be confounded with another, "last of THESE days," viz., *ἐπ' εσχάτου των ημερων τουτων*, used by the Apostle in Heb. i. 2. The term of the existence of this Adamic earth being divided into two periods, ("these days," and "the days to come") Christ appeared in the last part of these days—*ἐπ' εσχάτου των ημερων τουτων*—or as it is expressed in Heb. ix. 26—"at the conclusion of the ages"—our dispensation being the last granted to man during *his* day. So also in 1 Cor. x. 11, the Apostle speaks of them as those on whom "the ends of the ages have come."

But again, our present dispensation which is the last of those that precede the millennium has also itself a conclusion. The Apostle speaks of *ITS* last days when he says, "This know that in the *last days* perilous times shall come." 2 Tim. iii. 1. Our Lord also frequently uses the expression, "end of the age," to denote the conclusion of the present dispensation. See Matt. xiii. 40, and xxviii. 20. The context, therefore, will in each case determine how "last," or "end," is to be interpreted.



investiture of Christ with the sovereignty of earth as taught in Dan. vii. 13, and the subsequent manifestation of His glory on Zion ["yet have I inaugurated my King on Zion, the mountain of my holiness"] are apprehended by God's people! Awful blindness has fallen even on the true Church touching these things.

*Shall be established in the top of the mountains, and be exalted above [or away from] the hills.*] This exaltation of Zion like the cleaving asunder of the Mount of Olives (see Zech. xiv.) will be one of the results of Jehovah arising to shake terribly the earth. Zion will be raised high above all the other mountains that will begirt (see Ps. cxxv. 2,) Jerusalem and thus the light of the glory of the Lord, even as from an exalted beacon, shall be made manifest afar off. This physical exaltation of Zion will be one of those symbolic facts with which the millennium abounds. (See Occasional Papers No. iv. Vol. 2, p. 245.) It will indicate the established supremacy of the Divine government over all the subordinate authorities of earth. Then "the mountains [i. e. the greater authorities of earth] and the little hills [the lesser authorities] shall bring peace to the peoples by means of righteousness." They shall be ministers of righteousness, and the fruit of righteousness shall be peace.

*He shall rebuke many peoples.*] The word translated "rebuke" (רָבַח' Hiph.) is sometimes used of correction by words, as we read of Abraham reproving Abimelech, Gen. xxi. 25 : sometimes of the rebuke of chastisement as in 2 Sam. vii. 14 : or of wrath as in Habakkuk i. 12.

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thereof, "I *have* built." The spiritual building will be completed, and the foundation on which it rests will be known and recognised by all as being Christ *alone*.

Heaven, be it remembered, is not to be a transcript of the dispensational differences of earth. There is a power of unity in Christ, paramount to all the temporary dispensational distinctions that have been found amongst His people in the earth, and that power will finally be put forth in all its strength, and will bring all who are in Him into unhindered participation of His "fulness." "Out of His fulness have all we re-

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is one God who *shall justify* the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith." Rom. iii. 30. These words do not imply that none had been already justified, but the course of justifying action had not been completed towards all who were to be brought under it, and therefore the future tense is used. See also Romans v. 19. "As by the disobedience of one man many were constituted sinners, so by the obedience of One *SHALL* many *BE* constituted righteous." The future is used because the course of action spoken of is continuous and not concluded. "The Future," says Winer, "in expressing general truths sometimes very nearly assumes the import of the present." It is applied to "a rule *that continues to be in force*"—"a rule established by God." See Winer, Part III., § XL. In Hebrew the use of the future in expressing continuousness of action is constant. "In his [Jehovah's] law he will meditate," i.e. He will continue to meditate day and night. This is especially the case when a course of events avowedly successional is spoken of. Thus in Dan. vii. 17. "These great beasts which are four, are four kings, which *shall arise* (יָקִימוּ) out of the earth." The future tense is used, although the first of the beasts had already arisen: but the whole series was not complete.

ceived, and grace following upon\* grace," are words which, though true in earth, will be much more consciously realized and appreciated in heaven. Before the world was, all the elect were chosen in Christ, and unity of blessing predestinatively given to them in Him. "Whom he did predestinate, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified"—and that, with like glory, for it is expressly said to be in joint-heirship with Christ (Rom. viii. 17), and in association "with" Him (verse 17), and in His likeness—"conformed to the image of his Son that he might be the first-born among many brethren." This is said to be the appointment of God to all His children. "If children, then heirs: heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ." The Apostle expressly tells us in the Galatians that the Old Testament saints were "children" and "heirs." Are they heirs without an inheritance? No. They are not heirs without an inheritance. The predestinated are called, and the called are justified, and the justified are glorified. Such is the golden chain which God has, in the sovereignty of His grace, drawn around all His chosen people. Time reveals what eternity has bestowed. The process of unfolding is indeed gradual, and thus many profitable lessons are learned: but the elect of later dispensations have the comfort of knowing, that there is not one of their endowments in Christ that will not, in the eternal ages,

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\* Like wave following wave in constant successive flow—*κυμα αντι κυματος*, wave upon wave, a frequent meaning of *αντι*. As one wave goes, another succeeds into its place.

be participated in by their brethren who have preceded them in the path of faith. Abraham will not *in eternity* have less knowledge of Jehovah than Moses, because God was pleased *in time* to reveal Himself as Jehovah to Moses in a manner in which He had not revealed Himself to Abraham. "God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am Jehovah; and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them." Exodus vi. 3.\* So likewise, although Paul *while on earth* received the Spirit in a manner different from that in which He was received by Moses, yet Paul will not in glory be more in the power of the Spirit than Moses. Indeed, Paul himself had no title

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\* How little dispensational position *in the earth* has to do with the inheritance of glory in the world to come, may be seen from this, that although neither John the Baptist, nor any of the saints who preceded him, were in "the kingdom of heaven" as dispensationally formed on earth, yet they will not on that account be excluded from the kingdom *in glory*. "The kingdom of heaven" was dispensationally formed by the personal ministry of the Lord Jesus. Those consequently who preceded Him were not in it. Hence the Lord Jesus, speaking of John the Baptist, said, "The least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he:" that is, *dispensationally* and *ministerially* greater: for John the Baptist did not himself minister the Gospel of grace as Jesus and His disciples did. Nevertheless, the saints that preceded Jesus will not be shut out from the kingdom *in glory*, because they were not in it dispensationally on the earth. Jesus Himself says: "Many" (that word includes ourselves) "shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven." Matt. viii. 11. Therefore, they who were not in the kingdom of heaven dispensationally here, shall be in it in its glory.



to the Pentecostal gift of the Spirit as the Paraclete, except as coming under the covenant made with Abraham. Mark well his words to the Galatians. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that *the blessing of Abraham* might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that *we might receive the promise of the Spirit* through faith." Here we are expressly taught that we receive "*the promise of the Spirit*" as now given, because we share Abraham's blessing. Take the promise of the Spirit from Abraham, and we take it from ourselves. The promise of the Spirit is not a temporary dispensational promise merely. The Spirit will be the power of our new life in glory. Without it we could not act either here, or hereafter, as members of the body of Christ. Nevertheless, the possession of the Spirit, either as the Paraclete, or in any other way, is not that which supplies to us our *title* to membership in the body of Christ. Christ by His work in redemption supplies to us the *title*. What can be more important than for the soul to distinguish between *title* to privilege, and *ability to act* in the power of that privilege, especially when *the ability* is a result—a necessary result of the *title*; so that he who has the title, *must*, sooner or later, have the ability. Paul, the moment he said in faith, "Lord Jesus," belonged to the Church of God before he was baptized either by water, or by the Holy Ghost; although in due time he received both—not indeed to make him an heir of glory, but because he had been

made an heir of glory, through, and in, Christ. The thief on the Cross died without receiving either the baptism of water, or the Pentecostal gift of the Spirit, yet he had *the title*, the moment he believed, to all that the covenant with Abraham had conferred; and, in glory, he shall inherit all.

There are many relations which the Spirit of God is pleased to hold towards us. He became a Spirit of testimony to us in the Prophets, and subsequently in the Apostles. In the Prophets, as well as in the Apostles (though with less fulness), He testified of the same Christ and the same redemption. Moreover, as Lydia's heart was opened by the Spirit to receive the things spoken by Paul, so, from the beginning, the Spirit of God opened the hearts of all who received the testimony respecting the promised Seed, and created in them that which is called in Scripture, "the new man," without which there could have been no faith—no fruits of righteousness—indeed nothing that was pleasing or acceptable unto God, for "the flesh profiteth nothing"—in it "no good thing dwelleth." Consequently, we know that in the Old Testament saints (seeing that they were enabled "to please God") "the new man" *must* by the Spirit have been created, quite as truly as in the saints of the present dispensation. Again, seeing that "the new man" needs to be strengthened and directed, the Spirit also comes to be a sustaining and indwelling Spirit; otherwise "the new man" would be overpowered by the strength of "the old," and no fruits would be brought forth unto

God. The Old Testament saints, therefore, received the Spirit as truly as we, though to them He was given as the Spirit of *servantship* (*δουλειας*)—to us as the Spirit of *filial-condition* (*υιοθεσιας*).\* “We have not received the Spirit of servantship again to fear, but we have received the Spirit of son-condition, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” The Old Testament saints from Sinai onwards, were placed under the Law as children are placed under a tutor or governor† during the time of their pupilage; but the very passage that teaches this, teaches us that they were *children* and *heirs*, although during the time of their pupilage they differed not from servants. “Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a ser-

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\* See remarks on the meaning of *υιοθεσια* in Occasional Papers, Vol. I., Number 3, page 177.

† “Schoolmaster,” the word adopted in our version as the rendering of *παιδαγωγος*, *pædagogus*, does not adequately convey the meaning. “The *pædagogus* or tutor, frequently a superior slave, was entrusted with the moral supervision of the child. Thus his office was quite distinct from that of the *διδασκαλος*, so that the English rendering, ‘schoolmaster’ conveys a wrong idea. . . . The Rabbinical writers naturalised the word *παιδαγωγος*, נַגְדָן, and in the Jerusalem Targum, it is used to translate נַגְדָן (authorised version, a nursing father), Num. xi. 12. . . . The *παιδαγωγος* had the whole moral direction of the child, so that *παιδαγωγια* became equivalent to ‘moral training,’ and the idea conveyed by the term need not to be restricted to any one function.” *Professor Lightfoot—Epistle to Galatians*, p. 145. It was, however, part of the duty of the *παιδαγωγος* to see that the child was taken to right teachers, so that the thought of instruction is not to be excluded from the general supervision to which the *pædagogus* was appointed.

vant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world; but when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the condition of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." Gal. iv. 1—7. Can any one read these words and deny that the Old Testament saints were children as much as we; and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ? Shall we dare to dis sever links that God so solemnly declares that He has made fast for ever?

It has been frequently asserted, that in Scripture the Old Testament saints are nowhere called "the body of Christ." Now, even if this expression were not applied to them in Scripture, we can dispense with the expression if we can show that all the characteristics of the "one body" are declared to pertain to them in glory. There is, however, a remarkable passage in Isaiah where they are called Christ's "body." Jerusalem, as the corporate representative of Israel, is addressed, and it is said to her in words of future promise, "Thy dead shall live, my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of light, and the earth shall cast out the dead." In

this passage the dead saints of Israel are called Christ's mystical body—"my dead body," and as such, they are to arise out of death, and to live. See Isaiah xxvi. 19.

Again, is Abraham, to whom circumcision was given as the seal of the covenant of promise (for circumcision was not of Moses, but of the fathers, John vii. 22)—is Abraham to have primarily "the sign and the seal" of that Covenant of blessing, and yet to be excluded from all that that sign denotes—from all that that seal pledges? Circumcision denotes separation from the flesh. It denotes severance from all that naturally characterizes us as children of "the first man, who was earthy," and indicates the attainment of a new and unearthly condition of being, such as is seen in "the Second Man,"—"the Last Adam" glorified. The bestowment of unearthly glory in a new creation was that which God pledged to Abraham when He gave to him the sign of circumcision. He thereby covenanted that He would finally, by the operation of His own faithful grace, bring Abraham, and all who had been or should be of the faith of Abraham, into that new-creation-glory into which flesh and blood cannot enter, where there is nothing according to the flesh, but where all is according to the Spirit; in other words, where all is according to Christ *glorified*. Christ *by His death and resurrection* hath secured this for all those of whom He is the Representative and Head. He has borne them through judicial death into the glory of the new creation. "He is the head of the body, the Church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all

things he might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell . . . . for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are filled to the full (*πεπληρωμενοι*) in him who is the head of all principality and power: **IN WHOM ALSO YE ARE CIRCUMCISED** with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ [i.e. by a circumcision received by means of Christ]. Buried with him in baptism,\* wherein also ye are risen with him through faith in the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses." Col. i. 18 and ii. 9—13. Let any one ponder these

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\* God, by appointing Christ as our Substitute and granting us union with Him, has delivered us from the flesh, and all that was due to our sin in the flesh, so that by means of the death and resurrection of Christ we have received the circumcision made without hands. He who is one with Christ in resurrection is surely severed from the flesh. Baptism and circumcision alike indicate separation from the flesh as the result; but baptism is a much fuller type than circumcision. Circumcision does not symbolize the means by which we are separated from the flesh into a new creation; but baptism does. It points to the death and resurrection of our Substitute and Head as the means whereby this severation into glory is effected for us; for we are typically buried in the likeness of Christ's death by being placed beneath the water, and typically raised in the likeness of His resurrection when raised from the water. Nevertheless, baptism only unfolds that which is in circumcision involved; and there is no blessing pledged in baptism to the family of faith which is not equally pledged in circumcision.

words and say whether all the anti-typically circumcised (and not to be anti-typically circumcised is to be left in the uncircumcision of our flesh and to perish) whether all the anti-typically circumcised are not by this passage declared to be *in Him* in whom as "*Head of the body the Church*" (for it is in this character that He is spoken of throughout the passage) it hath pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell in order that they (the anti-typically circumcised) might "in Him be filled to the full." Unless then we say that Abraham was not anti-typically circumcised—unless we can show that he was left among the uncircumcised to perish, we must admit that he, and all others who are of faith, are "in," and "filled to the full in Him who is the Head of the body the Church." Can we say of such, that they are not in "the body the Church"?

When the Apostle too speaks of Christ as "the first-fruits of them *that have fallen asleep* (*των κεκοιμημενων*, see 1 Cor. xv. 20), these words emphatically designate the Old Testament saints, for *they*, not we, had fallen asleep when Christ rose. It is a description, therefore, that pertains not to us, but to them only. From other passages, however, we learn that we are not excluded from the blessedness of being able to say, that Christ is *our* "first-fruits" also: for immediately afterwards the Apostle teaches us that ALL who are Christ's at His coming, shall, at that coming, rise in the likeness of His glory. It is true of Abraham, and true of all who are in this dispensation brought to Christ, that we shall be "Christ's at His coming." It is as true, therefore, of

Abraham as of ourselves, that "as we have borne the image of the earthy we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." Is there any blessing higher—any more distinctive than this—the being raised in the likeness of Christ?

How can they who are all equally "like Him," differ in their powers of knowledge, or love, or service? \* We are expressly taught that all who are Christ's at His coming, shall be raised in His likeness, and that because they are "like Him," they shall "all see Him as He is," and all "know even as they are known." They shall alike have all perfectness of love towards God, and towards one another: otherwise, they could not be all "like Christ." We are accustomed to say that "we believe in the communion of saints." Now, the communion of the saints in glory is based upon their

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\* There may be difference of official position, and difference of reward among the redeemed. One may be over five, another over ten cities. Some may sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel—others may stand, one on the right hand, and the other on the left of the Lord of the whole earth in His glory. In the order of the divine government there will, no doubt, be great variety of employment and position, but this does not imply that they who are thus diversely honoured are not members of the same body, or that they are personally unlike to one another.

Christ as the eternal Son is co-equal with the Father—He is "God over all blessed for ever," yet in the arrangements of the Divine government, He will finally take the second place. "Then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that did put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." Yet His essential co-equality with the Father will not be altered, because He voluntarily takes the second place in the order of governmental administration.



common likeness unto Christ. It flows from the unity granted to them all in Him. How could there be communion between those whose sensibilities, and powers of thought and affection and feeling, were different? How could there be communion between the redeemed, if some were admitted into a circle within which others had no ability, or else were forbidden, to enter? In Heaven, we shall have no wish to narrow the circle of blessedness—no wish to occupy a sphere of thought and feeling from which Abraham, and David, and Daniel, are excluded. We shall not then desire to cavil at the truth so distinctly declared to us in Scripture, that the Heavenly City, the New Jerusalem, is “the mother of us all.” Gal. iv. 26.

Again, as Christ is called “the first-born from the dead” (*πρωτοτοκος εκ των νεκρων*. Col. i. 18. See also Rev. i. 5), so they who rise in the *first* resurrection when Christ comes, are called “*the Church of the first-born-ones*” (*εκκλησια των πρωτοτοκων*)—“first-born” in relation to those who, being brought into the fold of faith during the millennium, shall rise at the close of that period, when the whole Church will be complete. Consequently, all who are Christ’s at His coming (and is not Abraham Christ’s?) will rise at His coming, and be therefore included in the one “CHURCH of the first-born-ones.” Unless we exclude Abraham from the *first* resurrection he must belong to the “*Church of the first-born-ones.*”

They who reject this most blessed and vital doctrine of the unity of the redeemed in glory, are accustomed

to say that the Church of this dispensation is in Scripture called "the mystery." Now, even if this were so, it would afford no foundation for their theory. But it is not so. Many things connected with the history, both of the Church, and of Israel, and of the nations, are called "mysteries" (one mystery is "the mystery of iniquity"): but it is not true that either the Church as a whole, or that part of it which comes within the present dispensation, is itself called either "the mystery," or "a mystery." When the Apostle, in the third of the Ephesians, speaks of the mystery that had been hid from ages and generations, but which was then (specially though not exclusively) by his ministry being made known, what does he declare the mystery to be? Does he say that it consisted in the shutting out of all the saints who have preceded us from "the one body," and from "the household of God"? He says the very reverse. He says that we of the present dispensation obtain our blessings by being incorporated into the "commonwealth" of those who had preceded us. We dogs of the Gentiles, had been "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise," but we were to be shut out no longer. We are incorporated finally and fully into the one "commonwealth" (Eph. ii. 12)—the "one body" (Eph. ii. 16)—the one "household" (Eph. ii. 19), and are builded into the one spiritual building, part of the foundations of which had been laid by the Prophets, part by the Apostles, but of which the Lord Jesus had now become the chief corner-stone, so bringing into

association and unity the two lines of foundation. For the true commonwealth of Israel—the true possessors of the Covenants of promise, were not they who bore merely the outward name of Israel according to the flesh, but they only who were of faith, whether Jew, or whether Gentile, they, and they only, compose “the Israel of God.” With them we are, through grace, incorporated in unity of everlasting blessing. This is the mystery which the second and third chapters of the Ephesians unfold. Rome’s effort to nullify the tenth of Hebrews is not more daring than is the attempt made by the system we are considering, to nullify the doctrine of the second and third of the Ephesians.

The eleventh of the Hebrews has been similarly perverted. That chapter brings into blessed association of suffering-service here, and of glory hereafter, ourselves and those who have preceded us in the path of faith. We (though less faithful than they) are yet associated with those of whom the world was not worthy. We are taught that they too, like ourselves, looked for no mere earthly hope. Of Abraham it is said, that “he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” Heb. xi. 10. Subsequently it is said of him and of his children; “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly if they had been mindful of that country from

whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned: but now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city." Heb. xi. 13—16.

Can we with these verses before us say, that Abraham is to be excluded from that heavenly City which is the Bride of the Lamb? Are the saints of Israel to be excluded from their own Jerusalem—the New, Heavenly Jerusalem? Are the recipients of the promise to be excluded from the promise? Strange doctrine this! Why then (it may be asked), have they not received in fruition that of which they so long ago received the promise? Why is the accomplishment so long delayed? Because, says the Apostle, God has made a better provision for us than to permit that they, our elder brethren, should be perfected in glory apart from us. (*χωρίς ἡμῶν*).\* Can any words be devised that could declare more plainly the impossibility of severation betwixt the saints of old and ourselves? Shall we reject these words? Shall we pronounce them false?

Arguments might be almost indefinitely multiplied, but if these that have been advanced satisfy not, it would be idle to adduce others. Let it be remembered, however, that it is impossible to deny the unity of the redeemed in glory, and to hold fast the Gospel. If we rest our title to be in the Church and to have the

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\* See this text further considered in a tract entitled, "Old Testament Saints not excluded from the Church of God," as advertised at end of this number.

Church's glory on anything else than on that work of redemption which the Lord of glory commenced and finished on the earth, we do reject the Gospel. Ascribe our title to be in the Church to anything else than the blood of the Lamb, and we lay another foundation than that is laid—we teach another Gospel. "They who wash their garments\*—οἱ πλυνόμενοι τὰς στολάς αὐτῶν (and we only wash them in the blood of the Lamb) have title to the Tree of Life, and to enter in through the gates into the City." That City is the Bride of the Lamb.]

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VERSES 2 TO 4.

*Seraphim were standing above him ; six wings, six wings were to each ; with twain he covereth his face, and with twain he covereth his feet, and with twain he doth fly. And they cried one to the other [literally, this cried to this], and said, Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts, the fulness of the whole earth [i.e. that which filleth the whole earth] is his glory. And there shook the foundations of the thresholds at the voice that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.*

*Seraphim.*] That is, "fiery or burning ones," from שָׂרַף to burn with devouring fire, to burn consumingly, hence applied to those parts of the sin-offering which were burned up without the camp. (See Lev. iv. 12.) It is contrasted with the word קָטַר which means to

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\* Such is the correct reading.

*burn as fragrance*, and is applied to the incense (see Exodus xxx. 7), and to the fat of the sin-offering as burned on the altar of burnt-offering. (See Lev. xvi. 25.)

The fiery serpents sent to destroy the murmurers in Israel were also called "seraphim" [see Num. xxi. 6], not only as being fiery in appearance, but also as being the instruments through which destructive judgment was inflicted.

"Our God is a consuming fire." The heavenly agents of His will must therefore be holy: and this the appearance of the Seraphim as "*fiery or burning ones*" denoted. Their position *above* the Throne, denoted apparently their relation to Heaven. The Throne was seen on earth, but the agency connected therewith, howsoever it might be employed in earth, belonged not to the earth, but to Heaven. No mere earthly agents could have this character. The concealment of their faces and of their feet may be an act of reverence towards Him to whom they cried, "Holy, holy, holy;" or it may be intended to indicate that the eye even of the servants of God, is not permitted, at present, to follow the course of the heavenly agents of His will, nor to understand their methods. How little we know of beings whose forms are from their faces to their feet "covered!"

Yet these "burning ones" whose cry unto Jehovah was, "Holy, holy, holy," and whose touch, it might be supposed, would consume the sinner, became instruments whereby pardoning mercy reached Isaiah as soon

as the live coal taken from the altar of burnt-offering was in their hand. Propitiated holiness saveth.

*Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of Hosts.*] Such was the cry of the Seraphim to Him who afterwards came in the flesh, as Jesus of Nazareth. The Apostle John, quoting from this very chapter, says; "These things said Isaiah when he saw his (Christ's) glory, and spake of him." See John xii. 41. How the dogmas of Arianism, and Socinianism, and the yet more advanced and extended falsehoods of such a book as "*Ecce Homo*," fall before such a text as this!

There are many like texts in the Old Testament. See for example, Mal. iii. 1. "Behold I [Jehovah speaks] will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before ME." And again, in Isaiah xl. 3. "The voice crying, In the wilderness prepare ye the way of Jehovah, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." It was the way of JESUS that was to be thus prepared. He is the "Adonay Jehovah—the Lord Jehovah" of Isaiah xl. 11, "who shall feed his flock like a shepherd: and gently lead them who are with young." Compare John i. 18. "No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten God (*μονογενης θεος*)\* who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." This text plainly shows that the glory of the Adonay Jehovah, manifested throughout the Old Testament dispensation, was the glory of the Son. He made Himself of no reputation (*εκενωσε*, Philippians ii. 7, not *emptied Himself* as some have said), He did not

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\* See Tregelles and Codex Sinaiticus.

divest Himself of His Godhead when He came in the flesh—that was impossible. “In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” This was as true of Him when He lay as a babe in the manger as it is now. He is the Life and the Light essentially and always; as much so in Nazareth, or on the Cross as now in glory. In resurrection, the circumstances of manifestation are different, but it is the same Life. Voluntarily to hold His Divine power in abeyance, so as not to put it forth, save when it was the will of the Father that He should put it forth, is something very different from not *having* the power. If He had it not, how could He have said, “Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up?” Could any one, except Incarnate God, have met all that Jesus had to meet? What was there that was not arrayed against Him? Not only men instigated and impelled by Satan,—not only Satan with all the mighty power that he wields as the head of the unseen spiritual world of evil, but it also “pleased Jehovah to bruise Him, and to put Him to grief.” Sustainment was withdrawn from Him. Our Surety stood alone when the last cup of suffering—the cup of wrath, was put into His hand to drink. “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Yet under all this, not only did Jesus voluntarily continue to endure all that was appointed to be endured, but whilst enduring, He manifested all the absolute perfectness of heaven. Not more perfect was the manifestation of His excellency when He was in the bosom of the Father before all worlds, than it was whilst He was



passing through judicial death under wrath. Could any one that was not God have done this? His indwelling Godhead did not in one jot or tittle lessen the acuteness of the appointed suffering. As man He suffered as intensely as if He had not been God, but His Godhead, though it did not relieve His humanity from suffering, yet strengthened it to bear the suffering, and gave to that suffering a value which eternity will unfold.

*Thy sin expiated or atoned for.*] When we meet with words in Scripture which refer to SACRIFICE and the SATISFACTION thereby rendered to the claims of God's governmental holiness, it is needful to be careful as to their translation, in order that we may not confound between words that speak of the *results* of satisfaction, such as cleansing, forgiveness, &c., and passages which direct our thoughts to the *satisfying sacrificial act* by which such results are procured.

The act of Christ in presenting on the Cross by "His one oblation of Himself once offered a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction" for the sins of all His believing people, supplies the ground on which the TITLE to every blessing received by the redeemed in time, or in eternity, altogether and exclusively rests. Before any such blessings can be bestowed on sinners, provision must be made for the full satisfaction of the claims of God's holiness. The eternal Son, He who is called in John "the only-begotten God," (*μονογενής θεός*) undertook to make this satisfaction. Before it was actually accomplished, God fore-acted on

it, for Christ was "the Lamb fore-ordained." But now it *has been* accomplished. "There remaineth no more offering for sin." Our heavenly Advocate bases His intercession for His believing people on the fact that His one finished offering has removed the imputation of guilt, and secured to them the imputation of righteousness for ever. In making satisfaction for them it was needful that He should bear in their stead every appointed penalty, and present in their stead the perfectness of His own obedience—an obedience that was "unto death, even the death of the Cross." There He was "made a curse" (Gal. iii. 13); there also "He gave Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour." Eph. v. 2. We must, therefore, in reading Scripture, be careful to give their full weight to words that are intended to direct our minds to the great truth of SATISFACTION rendered unto God by the one oblation presented unto Him by our holy Substitute on the Cross. On His sacrificial work completed on earth before He took His seat in glory above the heavens, rests our *title* to every blessing that time or eternity *has* brought, or *shall* ever bring.

The word chiefly employed in the Old Testament to denote the SATISFACTION thus rendered is כָּפַר; in the New, ἱλασकोμαι and its cognates.

This word, כָּפַר *kaphâr*, is first found in Genesis vi. 14, where it is used, not in its secondary or sacrificial sense, but in its primary sense of "cover"—"to cover as by pitch." Noah was commanded *to cover* the ark with pitch. "Thou shalt cover it [כָּפַרְתָּ] with pitch."

[כָּפַר so called, because it covers.] But though the primary meaning of כָּפַר may thus be gained, we should greatly err if we supposed that when used in reference to sin and God's wrath against sin, it may be regarded as if it were identical with "hide," or "cover." *Ἰλασκομαι* is not identical with *καλυπτω*, nor כָּפַר with כָּסָה.

The meaning of כָּפַר (in *Pihel*) when used in its sacrificial sense is to be sought in the passage of Genesis in which it next occurs, where Jacob, speaking of Esau, says, "I will *appease* him [literally, I will *cover over his countenance*, i.e. *his wrath*] by the present." Genesis xxxii. 20. Here our attention is directed not towards the *result* as affecting Jacob, but towards Esau and his displeasure, and to the present by which Esau was to be satisfied and his anger pacified.

Accordingly, whenever כָּפַר is used in relation to sin, the thought of satisfaction rendered to God by atoning sacrifice is either the exclusive thought, or else a thought included in the meaning. Thus when the Levites are presented, it is said, "Aaron *made an atonement* for them to cleanse them." Numbers viii. 21. The atoning offering was *towards God*, and hence *the result*—the cleansing. So also Numbers xvi. 46. "Moses said unto Aaron, Take a censer and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation and make an atonement for them, for there is wrath gone out from the Lord: the plague is begun." From this verse the all-important sense of כָּפַר, as denoting atonement *made to God*, may be grounded. Wherever, therefore, we find this

word used in relation to sin or defilement, we must never quench the thought that the result to the person or thing beneficially affected, whether in the way of forgiveness, cleansing, or otherwise, is only reached *by means of an atoning offering presented to God.*

For the most part, our English translators preserve this thought sufficiently in the passages where כָּפַר occurs in its direct sacrificial sense. They commonly render it "*make atonement,*" not using that word in the sense of at-one-ment, i.e. reconciliation, but always in the sense of "expiation or expiatory equivalent."—*Johnson.*

Accordingly, when כָּפַר עַל is used (as it often is) to denote the application of the efficacy of the atonement made to the persons or things brought under it, such application is always the result of the blood of the sacrifice having been first offered expiatorily to God. See Lev. xvi. Consequently, כָּפַר should never be rendered simply *to purge* as in Ezek. xliii. 26, nor *to forgive* as in Jer. xviii. 23, nor "to be merciful" as in Deut. xxi. 8. If no *one* word can be found in English to express the meaning, a periphrasis should be used so as clearly to express the thought that the cleansing, or forgiveness, or mercy, results from and is founded on, atonement made to God.\* In every case the defile-

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\* If any single word be used, "expiate" is perhaps the best. *Pio* and *expio* are used in Latin sometimes to denote the act of appeasing [Silvanum lacte piabant]; sometimes the purgation of the guilty person [filium expiavit pecuniâ]; sometimes compensation rendered to make amends for a transgression committed [legatorum injurias regisque cædem expiabant]. But whether

ment or the guilt entailed *wrath*, and that *wrath* could only be removed by atonement.

The like may be said of the use of *ἱλασκομαι* and its cognates in the New Testament. They always involve the thought of atonement made to God. In rendering *כַּפֶּרֶת*, *ἱλασθηριον*,—*atonement-seat*, or some word expressive of the place where God acts in the power of atonement, would be far better than “*mercy-seat*.”

#### VERSES 8—13.

*And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? And I said, Here am I;*

the reference be to the person appeased, or to the person cleansed, or to the crime satisfied for, or to calamity averted [*fulmen piabant*], in either case the notion of atonement rendered to another is included. So is it likewise as respects *כַּפֶּר*.

The usual rendering of *כַּפֶּר* in our version is “*to make atonement*—atonement in the sense of expiatory offering. It is a pity that our translators have not always adhered to this rendering, but in not a few instances they have substituted for it, “*to make reconciliation*,” which is to be regretted, as we cannot be too careful in giving prominence to the thought of atonement made to God, and distinguishing it from the result.

Schindler, in his *Lexicon Pentaglotton* (as quoted by Archbishop Magee in his work on the Atonement, Vol. I., p. 326), after having observed that the general signification of *כַּפֶּר* is *taxit, operuit*, modifies this generic signification according to the change of subject thus;—*de facie seu irā, placavit, reconciliavit*: *de peccato, remisit, condonavit, expiavit*: *de sordibus, expurgavit*: *de aliis, abstulit, removit*. But this is not satisfactory, unless it were added that the first meaning of *appeasing wrath* is involved in all the subsequent modifications, and should be expressed in the translation.

*send me. And he said, Go, and say to this people, Hear indeed, but understand not; and see indeed, but perceive not. Make fat the heart of this people, and its ears make heavy, and its eyes close; lest it see with its eyes, and with its ear hear, and its heart understand, and turn, and one heal it. And I said, How long, O Lord? And he said, Until desolate be the cities for want of an inhabitant, and the houses for want of men, and the ground be utterly waste, and Jehovah shall far away have removed man, and great shall be the forsaking [that which is left forsaken] in the midst of the Land. But yet in it shall be a tenth; and it shall return, and be for consuming. Like the terebynth, and like the oak which in falling have substance [vitality] in them, so a holy seed shall be the substance in it.*

*Hear indeed, but understand not.]* There is something peculiarly solemn in living at a period when judicial blindness is sent because of mercies despised. So has it been in Israel: so is it in Christendom. The past history of Israel illustrates but feebly the manner in which the teachers and rulers of Christendom have perverted the hearts, and misdirected the energies of those whom they have taught and guided. Even real Christians, for the most part, shun the close guidance of the Word of God. They cherish doctrines that will not bear the test of Scripture, and either give themselves over to a latitudinarian laxity of thought, or else to a wild imaginativeness, than which nothing leads farther from the paths of Truth. But Christen-

dom has well nigh run its course. Out of its very centre, Antichristianism, like a foul and loathsome excrescence, is about to spring. Around Israel the toils of the great Apostate will be in an especial manner drawn. We need not marvel, therefore, that they will return "*to be consumed*" by judgments more terrible than have ever yet fallen on them, or any other people. Nevertheless, finally the cup of trembling shall be taken out of their hands and put into the hands of their Gentile oppressors. "Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again; but I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee, which have said to thy soul, Bow down that we may go over." Is. li. 22. This, however, will have to be considered subsequently in more detail.

*To be consumed.*] היתה לבער. For a similar use of these words, see Numbers xxiv. 22. "The Kenite shall be wasted," literally, "*be for consuming or burning.*"

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## MARCIONISM.

### DOCTRINE OF MARCION RESPECTING THE OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS.\*

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AMONG the many indications of the rapidity with which men's minds are departing from the Truth, there are few more ominous than the extensive diffusion in this country of a system of doctrine that teaches, that all the Old Testament Saints (although purchased unto God by the precious blood of Jesus) are to be excluded for ever from the Church, and from the Church's glory—that stigmatizes as Jewish, and as not designed for the Church, those very instructions which the Lord Himself, in His parting words to His disciples, expressly commanded to be taught to us†—that teaches that the Apostolate of St. Paul is of a higher order than that of the Twelve, and that his Gospel was different from theirs—that denies that the fulfilment of the Law by Jesus was essential to the salvation of the Church—that (instead of teaching, according to Scripture, that the Father hath “reconciled us *in the*

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\* To be read in connexion with note on Old Testament Saints, see p. 154.

† See two last verses of Matthew.



*body of Christ's flesh through death*) speaks of our being "justified in a risen Christ"—that confines to the Jews (as being alone formally placed under the Law) the text that speaks of Christ "being made a curse for us" (Gal. iii. 13), and imagines that the Church owes its salvation not to such a redemption, but to union with the Person of the Son. These, and like things, are now being extensively taught and received. Recently I heard one of the sustainers of this system affirm that there are "two Gospels; two ways, and two ends of salvation." He might have added, two Christs (for his system required it)—a Christ for the salvation of the Church (or what they suppose to be the Church) and a Christ for the salvation of the saints of Israel and others.

Few, probably, are aware of the origin of these and like doctrines. Their origin is evidently Gnostic. Marcion, a Gnostic of the second century, appears to have been the first who taught his disciples to reject as not properly Christian, everything that he was pleased to stigmatize as *Jewish*. Modern German neology, which has ransacked antiquity in order to become eclectic of falsehood, has disinterred and remoulded many a Gnostic heresy, and so they have been introduced into this country; although in England Marcionism has not as yet been fostered so much by neologians as by others.

The connexion between Marcionism and Germanism has thus been remarked on by Vaughan:—

"What Marcion is said to have done literally, that

Schleiermacher does virtually in his system: for [i.e. instead of] ‘I am not come to destroy the Law and the Prophets,’ *he reads the converse*. . . . The dread of everything Jewish, the general characteristic of Gnosticism, has been carried to its extreme in modern times by Bäuer of Tübingen, who has misspent no ordinary learning and ability in the attempt to show that the history of early Christianity is that of a struggle out of a Judaized atmosphere into a purer element; and that when the Christian religion shall have been entirely freed from the Jewish prejudice which narrowed the mind of our Lord (!!!) and His immediate followers, its work will be accomplished, and the law of love universal. The Judæophobia, as one may call it, has been exemplified among ourselves of late in a ‘History of the Hebrew Monarchy.’—*Vaughan’s Essay on the Writings of Schleiermacher*, p. 78.

Marcion carried his rejection of everything *Jewish* so far that he excluded Abraham and the Old Testament Saints not only from the Church, but from salvation. “False,” says Irenæus, “is Marcion, and so are his followers, who exclude from the inheritance *Abraham*, to whom the Spirit hath borne testimony by many others as well as by Paul, saying, ‘Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.’ So also the Lord bore testimony to him . . . saying, ‘When ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of heaven, but you yourselves cast out.’ This, therefore, is manifest, that they who disallow Abraham’s salvation and frame the

idea of another God besides Him who made the promise to Abraham, are themselves aliens from the kingdom of God, and are excluded from the inheritance of incorruption, seeing that they set at naught and blaspheme God, who introduceth through Jesus Christ Abraham to the kingdom of heaven as well as his seed, that is, the Church, upon which is conferred the adoption and the inheritance promised to Abraham.”—*Irenæus. Lib. iv., cap. xviii.*

Marcion not only rejected the Law and the Prophets, but even in the New Testament he refused to receive any of the Epistles except those of St. Paul, not including the Hebrews, and he rejected all the Gospels except that of Luke, which, however, as well as the Pauline Epistles he mutilated, and received only in part.

The Marcionite “aversion,” says Lardner, “to the Old Testament was so great, that on this account they mutilated many passages in the New in those books which they admitted, rejecting all that related to the Law and to the Prophets, or which were quoted thence as plainly foretelling the coming of Jesus Christ, or which spoke of His Father as the Creator of the world.”—*Lardner, History of Heretics. Chap. x., § 33.*

As regards the Marcionite notion that “Paul alone knew the truth, and that to him *the mystery was manifested by revelation*,” Irenæus writes as follows. “With regard to those (the Marcionites) who allege *that Paul alone knew the truth, and that to him the mystery was manifested by revelation*, let Paul himself convict them when he says, that one and the same God wrought in

Peter for the Apostolate of the circumcision, and in himself for the Gentiles. Peter, therefore, was an Apostle of that very God, whose was also Paul: and Him whom Peter preached as God among those of the circumcision, and likewise the Son of God, did Paul [declare] also among the Gentiles. For our Lord never came to save Paul alone, nor is God so limited in means, that He should have but one Apostle who knew the dispensation of His Son. . . . . Again, in the Epistle to the Corinthians, when Paul had recounted all those who had seen God after the resurrection, he says, in continuation, 'But whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed,' acknowledging as one and the same, the preaching of those who saw God after the resurrection from the dead."—*Irenæus. Book iii., chap. xiii.*

It would be impossible within the limits of the present paper to detail all the omissions and alterations which Marcion made in the Gospel of Luke, which he professed to receive, and in the Epistles of Paul. They may be found at length in Epiphanius and Irenæus, or in Lardner. I will content myself with a few examples.

In Luke xiii. 28, instead of reading, "When ye shall see *Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets* in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out," Marcion reads it, "When ye shall see *all the just* in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves rejected," &c. In Gal. iii. Marcion omitted the sixth, seventh, and eighth verses, in order to get rid of the mention of

Abraham, and of the Gospel as having been preached to him; on which account he ought also to have omitted part of the ninth verse, “*συν τῷ πιστῷ Ἀβρααμ*—*with faithful Abraham*, and according to Tertullian’s manner of stating the argument against him, this was the case.”—*Lardner*, § 43.\*

He also omitted, according to Rufinus, the two last chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, ending the Epistle with the 23rd verse of the fourteenth chapter. We can well understand his reason for this. Not only is the fifteenth chapter full of quotations from the Jewish Prophets respecting the call of the Gentiles into participation of Jewish blessings (as for example, “Rejoice ye Gentiles with his people”), but in the sixteenth chapter the Apostle declares that he used the prophetic writings, i.e. the writings of the Old Testament, in making known the Gospel which he was sent to preach. This was the very thing that Marcion denied.

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, amongst other alterations, he erased, in the 20th verse of the second chapter,

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\* Tertullian’s words are: “When he also adds, ‘for ye are all the children of faith,’ it becomes clear that what the heretic’s (Marcion’s) industry erased was the mention of Abraham’s name, for by faith the Apostle declares us to be ‘children of Abraham;’ and after mentioning him he expressly calls us ‘children of faith also’ . . . . and of whose faith, if not Abraham’s? ‘To Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy Seed, which is Christ.’ Fie on Marcion’s sponge! But indeed it is superfluous to dwell on what he has erased, when he may be more effectually confuted from what he has retained.”—*Tertullian against Marcion. Book v., § 4.*

the word "*prophets*" ("built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets") for Marcion saw that all his system must fall if he admitted that the two lines of foundation laid respectively by the Apostles and Prophets were knit into the unity of the same building by both resting on the same chief one corner-stone, Jesus.

These examples may suffice. The fact that Marcion saw the necessity of erasing these and like words, was a sufficient acknowledgment of their conclusiveness if permitted to stand. Which shall we say is the greater sin, to cancel the words of Scripture, or to destroy by false exposition their plain unmistakable meaning?

The Marcionites also adopted the heresy of the Docetæ, and taught that Christ had *the appearance* of a human body, but not the reality—that He appeared to have flesh, but really had not, so that His sufferings were apparent merely.\* They made no distinction between "flesh" in a physical, and "flesh" in a *moral* sense; and believed that everything *material* must partake of evil.

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\* "Nothing," says Tertullian, "substantial can be allowed to be effected by an unsubstantial thing,—nothing full by a vacancy. If the habit were putative, the action was putative; if the workers were imaginary, the works were imaginary. On this principle, too, the sufferings of Christ will be found not to warrant faith in Him. For He suffered nothing who did not truly suffer."—*Tertullian* III. 8.

Some of the followers of Marcion, however, believed Christ to have real flesh, though they would not admit that He was born. This seems to have been the notion of Apelles.

It must not be supposed, however, that Marcion, in rejecting the Old Testament, rejected it as untrue. He evidently believed its truth, but contended that the God and the Christ of the Old Testament were different from the God and the Christ of the New. Else he could not have avowed his belief in a Jewish Christ to come. "Marcion," says Lardner, "acknowledged Jesus to be Christ, but not the Christ foretold by the Jewish Prophets. He could not deny that a Christ or Messiah was there spoken of, but he said a Person different from our Lord Jesus Christ was there meant. He allowed, as Tertullian expresses it, that the Prophets of the Creator had promised a Saviour to the Jewish nation, who should deliver them out of the hands of their enemies, and restore them to freedom. But he pretended that this Deliverer was not the Son of God; and that the oracles of the Old Testament did not agree to Jesus Christ. So that 'this man,' as Tertullian observes, 'who was so adverse to Judaism did himself Judaize in the most shameful manner.' 'Marcion,' says that writer, 'is for two Christs—one who appeared in the time of Tiberius for the salvation of all nations, and another the restorer of the Jewish state, who is yet to come.'"\*

"The doctrine of two Christs is also asserted by the Marcionite in the dialogue ascribed to Origen. In a

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\* The later developments of Marcion's system were probably adopted by him from Cerdo, whom he met at Rome, and who seems to have advanced further in Gnosticism than Marcion had when Cerdo met him.

work also said to be written by Athanasius, we are informed that Marcion supposed that as Jesus came from the *good* God, so there was to be another from the *just* God, because each of them was to be the father of a Christ peculiar to Himself; the *good* God of one, the *just* God of another."—*Lardner*, II. 21. He drew a distinction between true moral perfection, which, according to him, "consists in love and goodness, whose essence is only to communicate itself, only to bless, to make happy, to redeem; and mere justice, which metes out everything by desert, rewards and punishes, requites good with good, and evil with evil, which gives birth to mere outward discipline, but can communicate no power of moral enthusiasm—this (says Neander) was Marcion's great *practical* and fundamental idea which formed the nucleus of his whole theory. But between love and a justice that revealed itself in punishment he found no means of reconciliation."—*Neander*, Vol. ii., p. 140. Hence, believing matter and flesh to be essentially connected with evil, he taught that the God and the Christ of the Old Testament and of the Jews, were distinct from the God and Christ of the New Testament revealed to the Church, which comes as a kind of parenthesis between the antient Jewish period, and the future Jewish period when the Christ of the Jews will appear and effect their deliverance.

"The point of practical importance with Marcion," says Neander, "was to assert the absolute newness of the creation by Christianity; to sever every link of connection between it and the world as it had subsisted



before.” “While he gave an exclusive prominence to the love of God, the revelation of which in the gospel had penetrated his whole soul (!!) he allowed all the other divine attributes to retire out of view. Seeking only to insist upon that which belonged peculiarly to Christianity, but rending it from its connection with the groundwork of the Old Testament, he determined to know nothing at all of a retribution grounded on the holiness of God.”\*—*Neander, Vol. ii., p. 140.*

“It seems” (I still quote from Neander) “although it is a point which cannot be determined with certainty,† that Marcion taught that the Messianic predictions of the Old Testament would still be actually accomplished in behalf of the believers in the Demiurge. [Marcion’s name for the God of the Jews.] The Messiah promised by the Demiurge would yet appear and bring to a rigid judgment those who had not been freed from his power by faith in *the higher Christ*, and awakening those who had died *righteous* according to the Old Testament, would unite them all in a millennial reign of earthly felicity. The *eternal heavenly kingdom* to which the Christians belonged would then form the

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\* That is, he excluded such acting in righteousness from the God and Christ of the Church, but not from the God and Christ of the Jews, as will be seen from the remarks below.

† The words of Tertullian clearly show that Marcion expected a Christ yet to come to the Jews. Tertullian’s words are, “when to these are added their Christs, the one which appeared in the time of Tiberius” [whom they believed to have had the *appearance* of flesh only] and the other which is promised by the Creator or God of the Jews.—*Tertullian, Book I., chap. xv.*

direct antithesis to this perishable *earthly* kingdom. The souls of Christians would lay aside their gross bodies as the bird rises out of the egg. . . . The God of love [i.e. the God of the Church] does not punish ; those, however, who refuse to accept the proffered fellowship with Him will fall under the power of the Demiurge [the God of the Jews] and His avenging justice. Whoever, on the other hand, enters into fellowship with the Father through faith in the Son of God, becomes partaker, even on earth, of *a divine life* superior to the power of the Demiurge and of Matter. For him there is no longer any judgment. Delivered from the power of the Demiurge, he is under the special protection of the God of love. . . . From the whole context of Marcion's ideas resulted the antithesis between those who remained subject to the Demiurge's government, and those who, released from his power, become objects of the providential care of the Supreme God, whom He trains for His kingdom, with whom all things shall work together for good."\*—*Neander, Vol. ii., p. 147.*

The history of Marcion affords a memorable example

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\* The distinction drawn by Marcion between the condition of the Church and those whom he imagines to be placed in a subordinate condition of blessing under the God of the Jews, is very marked. It would seem, however, that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the rest of the Old Testament saints, were excluded by Marcion even from this subordinate blessing. His statement as to them is most revolting. I will not transcribe it. It may be seen in *Epiphanius*, Lib. I., § 42, and still more fully in *Irenæus*, Lib. I., chap. XXVII.

of the manner in which men, while pursuing a phantom of imagined spirituality, can be drawn into a place of direct antagonism to God and to His Word. There can be little question that Marcion was sincere. He was zealous, energetic, and self-denying even to austerity. Ephraem Syrus says that Marcion "acquired, by his ascetism, a deceptive shew of sanctity." In his early days he is said to have given his money to the Church. (*Pecuniam in primo calore fidei ecclesiæ contulit.*) To *his* mind matter was synonymous with evil; and flesh, in its physical sense, identical with sin. Absorption into something immaterial was, in his estimate, essential to salvation. The assumption of real flesh by the Son of God and the resurrection of the body, he denied. But the Scripture stood in his way; it contradicted his thoughts, and therefore the greater part of Scripture he avowedly rejected. He would have been more consistent and more honest, if he had rejected the whole.\* For he acknowledged not either

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\* It is better for the interests of Truth that its adversaries should reject Scripture rather than that they should professedly own it, and then undermine it by sophistical subtleties of interpretation. In Germany, on the subject of justification, laborious efforts have been made by many writers to misinterpret the words of Scripture, and so to use Scripture as a weapon against the Truth. This habit, however, is now being abandoned, and a more audacious (yet more truthful) course adopted. Thus Köllner, one of the latest German commentators, says, "It is clear that the true sense of this passage (Romans iii. 26, 27) entirely agrees with the doctrine of the Church, concerning vicarious satisfaction, as unfolded in the Lutheran symbols. Nevertheless, although it is certain that Paul intended to teach the doctrine of vicarious

the God, or the Christ, or the redemption, of which the Scriptures speak. The Scripture speaks only of the God of Israel and of the Christ of Israel, and of a redemption wrought out in the midst of Israel according to the Law and the Prophets—but this God, and this Christ, and this redemption, Marcion scorned.

It is said that Marcion, towards the end of his life, repented of his heretical course, and sought to counteract its effects. But it was too late. In a world like this, a natural, an appointed buoyancy belongs to the thistle's seed; it floats upon the breeze, and the air's ready current soon diffuses it over the surface of the wide earth. "Thistles shall it bring forth to thee." "Marcion's heresy," says Epiphanius who flourished about the middle of the fourth century, "is even now existent at Rome and in Italy, in Egypt and Palestine. in Arabia and in Syria, in Cyprus and in Thebais,

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satisfaction, not merely as a figure (or in the way of accommodation, but as a matter of full personal conviction), yet it is easy to see how he was necessarily led to adopt this view, from the current opinions of the age in which he lived."—(*Köllner*, as quoted by Dr. Charles Hodge in his commentary on the Romans.) "Such writers" (continues Dr. Hodge) "are at least free from the guilt of *perverting* the Word of God. They allow the Bible to mean what it says, although they refuse to submit to its teaching. This is better than not only refusing to submit, but forcing the Scriptures to teach our own foregone conclusions. In Germany, the subjection of the Bible to philosophy has come to an end. In this country, it is still struggling for liberty. It is desirable that the separation should here, as there, be made complete, between those who bow to the authority of the word of God, and those who acknowledge some higher rule of faith. Then both parties can agree as to what the Bible really teaches."

It is found, too, in the Persian district, and in other places."—*Epiph.* i., p. 42. "The essential character of Marcion's mind," says Neander, "would make him labour more earnestly and assiduously than other Gnostics in the propagation of his principles. For, while others believed it impossible to communicate their higher knowledge to any save a small number of Christians—the spiritual men: Marcion, on the other hand, was convinced that his doctrine was no other than the primitive Christian one. . . . He must have felt himself constrained to communicate to all Christians the light of truth which had fallen to his own share. Hence he made frequent journeys, and spent his life in an uninterrupted series of conflicts with heathens and with Christians. To be hated, and to suffer, he looked upon as the destination of every Christian. 'Fellow objects of hate and fellow-sufferers' (*συμμισημενοι και συνταλαιπωροι*), was his common form of salutation to his brethren in the faith."—*Neander, Vol. ii., p. 138.*

His heresy received from some the condemnation it deserved. The aged Polycarp of Smyrna, is said to have met Marcion at Rome. Marcion, who in his earlier days had known Polycarp, accosted him: "Dost thou remember me, Polycarp?" "I do know thee," replied Polycarp; "the first-born of Satan." "Such (says Irenæus, who records the incident) was the horror which the Apostles and their disciples felt against holding even a verbal communication with any corrupters of the truth; as Paul also says: 'a man that is

a heretic, after the first and second admonition reject, knowing that he that is such is subverted and sinneth, being condemned of himself.'”—*Irenæus*, III. 3. Such was the comment of *Irenæus*: such the depth of his feeling respecting departures from the Truth. How utterly contrasted with the serene apathy with which men now contemplate these things, and call their indifferentism, sobermindedness and love! *Neander* comments on the same incident as *Irenæus*. “The old man,” says *Neander*, speaking of *Polycarp*, “otherwise so amiable, could not extend his love to the enemies of the Gospel; and as such *Marcion* appeared to him, *for he was unable to discern the Christian element which lay at the root of his very errors!*” That is, a man may utterly reject all that God has revealed respecting Himself and His ways, and yet “the Christian element” may be found at “the root of all his errors.”

The heresies of *Marcion* are scarcely more to be deprecated than the comments of *Neander* on them. Thus *Neander* supposes him to have “belonged to the number of those who were first brought to the faith, not by the tradition of the Church, but by their own study of the written word”—that word which he mutilated and blasphemed. “Perhaps,” continues *Neander*, “it was the majesty of Christ as it shone upon Him in the contemplation of His life, and the study of His words, that attracted him to Christianity. And the Pauline type of doctrine which most completely harmonized with his tone of mind, may have been the form in which he first learned to understand

Christianity, and which chained his spirit once for all.”  
—*Neander, Vol. ii., p. 133.*

Again, Neander writes: “the consciousness of redemption formed the ground-tone of his (Marcion’s) religious life: the fact of redemption he regarded as the central point of Christianity. [Redemption, as revealed in Scripture, had no place in Marcion’s system at all.] . . . . To his heart, filled and flowing with the image of the God of mercy and compassion who had appeared in Christ, Nature appeared as something wholly inconsistent with the way in which this God had revealed himself to him in his soul. . . . . The same mental tendency which made it impossible for him to recognise in Nature the God of the gospel, allowed him to see nothing but contrariety, no fundamental unity between the Old Testament and the New. . . . . In the Churches of Asia Minor he believed it impossible to recognise the genuine Christianity which had been preached to them by the Apostle Paul. Accordingly, this conviction may have given rise [to his desire] to purify Christianity from the foreign Jewish elements with which it had been mixed, and to restore it to its primitive form. . . . . And so, step by step, he was continually driven to place the Old and New Testament in sharper contrast to each other,” until at last, he boldly taught that there was one God and Christ for the Jews, and another God and Christ for the Church.

I will now conclude these already too extended remarks, by a few brief quotations from some of our

Protestant Confessions in reference to the inclusion of the Old Testament Saints in the one elect body, the Church.

The confession of Dort, after quoting the words, "whom he predestinated, them he also called, and whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified," adds, "this election is not manifold (*i.e.* diverse) but one and the same of all which are to be saved, both under the Old and New Testament; because the Scripture speaks but of one only good pleasure, purpose and counsel of the will of God by which He hath chosen us from eternity, both unto grace and glory, both unto salvation and the way of salvation, which He hath prepared that we should walk therein." . . . . and "this doctrine, touching God's election, was by God's appointment declared by the Prophets, by Christ Himself, and by the Apostles as well under the Old Testament as the New."—*Articles of Dort.*, viii. and xiv.

Also the Confession of Scotland.

"We most constantly believe that God preserved, instructed, multiplied, honoured, decreed, and from death called to life *His Church in all ages, from Adam till the coming of Christ in the flesh.* As we believe in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, so do we most constantly believe that from the beginning there hath been, and now is, and to the end of the world shall be, one Church, that is to say, a company, a multitude of men chosen of God, who rightly worship and entreat Him by true faith in Christ Jesus, &c."—*Art.* v. and xvi.



So also the seventh of our English Articles.

“The Old Testament is not contrary to the New : for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to Mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and Man, being both God and Man. Wherefore they are not to be heard, which feign that the Old Fathers did look only for transitory promises. Although the Law given from God to Moses, as touching ceremonies and rites, do not bind Christian men, nor the civil precepts thereof ought of necessity to be received in any commonwealth ; yet, notwithstanding, no Christian man is free from the obedience of the Commandments which are called moral.” \*

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\* The doctrines of the Roman Church are, it is well known, most erroneous and false as to the condition of the Old Testament saints whilst militant on the earth. Yet, even they, warned perhaps by Marcion's example, refuse to exclude them from the Church in glory. Thus Dr. Manning, in his recent work on “The Mission of the Holy Ghost,” writes as follows :—

“The multitude and fellowship of the just who, from Abel to the Incarnation, had lived and died in faith and union with God, constituted the soul of a body which should be hereafter. They did not constitute the body, but they were waiting for it. They did not constitute the Church, which signifies not only the *election* but the *aggregation* of the servants of God ; not only the calling out, but the calling together into one all those who are united to Him. Some of the Fathers do indeed speak of them as the Church, because they were to the then world what the Church is now to the world of to-day. They belong also to the Church, though it did not then exist, just as the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world, though the sacrifice on Calvary was four thousand years deferred. All grace was from the beginning given through the Most Precious Blood, though as yet it had not been shed. So the mystical body had its members, though as yet it was not created.

See also Luther :

“When the Scripture saith that all nations which are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham, it followeth necessarily that all, as well Jews as Gentiles, are accursed without faith, or without faithful Abraham. For the promise of blessing was given to Abraham that in him all nations should be blessed. There is no blessing then to

They were admitted to it when the kingdom of heaven was opened to them, and the Incarnate Word was exalted to His glory as Head over all things to the Church.

“As then till the Incarnation there was no Incarnate Head, so till the day of Pentecost there was no complete organization.”

There are, no doubt, parts of the above statement to which just exception might be taken, but passing these, I quote the passage merely because of its unequivocal acknowledgment of the inclusion of the Old Testament saints in the ultimate glory of the Church. “All grace was from the beginning given through the most precious blood, though as yet it had not been shed,” are important words. I question, however, whether these words and the paragraph as a whole, would please the censors of the Vatican, though probably they may be willing to make, for a time, concessions to Protestant prejudices in England.

We must remember too, that although the words “most precious blood” are blessed words, and grateful to the hearts of those who understand them according to the Scripture, yet they are suggestive of far different thoughts to the mind of a Romanist. They direct his soul not to the once perfected sacrifice, whereby he that believeth is sanctified and perfected for ever, but he thinks of blood carnally taken by him in material flesh, which he believes that he actually eats, and thus the value of that holy blood becomes his. Unless he carnally eats it he perishes: and so he becomes an idolater, and worships a phantom, and does (unless he repents) perish.

Dr. Manning’s statements, respecting the condition of the Old Testament saints *whilst on earth*, are most objectionable. Thus

be looked for, but only in the promise made unto Abraham, now published by the Gospel, throughout the whole world. Therefore whosoever is without that blessing is accursed."—*Luther on Gal. iii. 10.*

See also Calvin :

"And this is a singular proof of the benevolence of God toward us, that although from the beginning of

when he says that "the Church is gathered from the world by baptism, and that into every soul rightly baptized the grace of Faith, Hope and Charity are infused, together with the seven gifts and a substantial union of the Holy Ghost with the soul is constituted," it is very evident that he excludes the Old Testament saints, while on earth, from the condition into which he pretends that baptism brings, and excludes them from the possession of that LIFE which is the portion of all the regenerate of every dispensation, and which when given involves everlasting relationship to God as His sons, and heirs of glory. Again, Dr. Manning says, "before the Incarnation, the Holy Spirit wrought in the souls of men, one by one, illuminating, converting, sanctifying, and perfecting the elect. But the union between His presence and the soul was conditional on the correspondence and fidelity of the individual. It was a dissoluble union," &c. (p. 58). And again, "its (Israel's) sacraments were shadows, working *ex opere operantis* by the faith of the receiver, *not by the virtue that went out of them,*" &c.

The italics are mine. If all this were true, the Old Testament saints would not have been the subjects of *effacious* grace at all; and seeing that such grace could not reach them for the first time in another world, they must have been excluded from the company of the regenerated and the saved for ever. He who is not regenerated *here*, will certainly not be regenerated in another world. This doctrine of sacramental grace leads in the same direction as Marcionism. When Dr. Newman began to Romanize, he wrote some letters to the *Christian Observer*, questioning whether the Old Testament saints could be said to have been

the world he showed Himself bountiful to His children [the Old Testament saints], He nevertheless so regulated His grace as to provide for the salvation of the *whole* body [in which we, of this dispensation, are included]. What more could any one among ourselves desire than that regard should be had to him in respect of the blessings with which God hath followed up Abra-

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regenerated, seeing that they had not received the sacrament of regeneration.

Dr. Manning recognises no distinction between the operation of the Spirit of God in quickening the elect, and His coming personally to dwell in those whom He has quickened. The Old Testament saints were regenerated as truly as we. They had LIFE as truly as we: and although the Spirit was not given to them as the Paraclete, or as the Spirit of son-condition (*υιοθεσιαις*), yet He was given to them as the Spirit of servanthip (*δουλειαις* Rom. viii. 15) because, though they were sons (see Gal. iv.), they were in a state of pupilage until redemption was perfected. "Now I say, that the heir, so long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all." Gal. iv. 1. And as the Old Testament saints received acceptance through the fore-seen value of the blood of Immanuel, so also they received Life before He, in whom that life was, was manifested in the flesh. As light existed before the sun, and was afterwards in the sun concentrated, and from it dispensed, so life was dispensed to the elect before He came, in whom that life essentially was, and in whom it was manifested. God fore-acted on what Christ was as fore-ordained. But wherever there is a disposition to misrepresent, or to magnify unduly the present dispensational standing of the Church, there the sacrificial work of Christ as alone giving the TITLE to all the blessings brought by redemption is depreciated, and results which God has made to depend exclusively on Christ's relation to the redeemed, are ascribed not to Christ's work, but to the Spirit. The truth of the Gospel is lost when this is so. Whether we say that they who are not baptized do not belong to

ham, Moses, David, &c., so that with them he might coalesce in the body of Christ?"—Calvin on Heb. xi.

God has made a better provision for us than to allow that our elder brethren, who have preceded us in the path of faith, should be perfected in glory apart from us. The Scripture uses the word "apart"—*χωρις*. They who are not *apart* must be *together*.

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the body of Christ, or that they who did not receive the Spirit in the manner in which He is now dispensationally given, do not belong to the body of Christ, in either case we destroy the truth of the Gospel. *Title to belong* to the body of Christ is founded entirely *on* the work of Christ in redemption. The gift of the Spirit (which is a purchased result of *redemption*) does not give the *title* to membership in the body of Christ, but supplies *the power* of that *associated* action which is needed by those who are called to act together as co-members in one body. Are we to confound *title*, and power to act according to such title?

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## THOUGHTS ON ISALAH VII.

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IN the interval between the mission of Isaiah with that awful message of judicial blindness recorded in the preceding chapter, and the events narrated in the chapter before us, many years had passed. The whole of the reign of Jotham, and part of the reign of Ahaz, had intervened. It had been a period of very diversified experience to Judah.

The long-suffering mercy of God, still lingering around them, had given them in Jotham a king who was willing and anxious to lead them in right paths. There are few greater or more needed blessings than right guidance. We need it alike in the Church and in the world. We need both to be instructed and to be governed by those greater and wiser than ourselves. Yet there is no appointment of God against which man more persistently struggles than this. Self-government is the only government that self-will tolerates, and thus a path is trodden that leads farther and farther away from Truth, and from happiness, and from God. There is no greater proof of the whole moral framework of society being diseased than when opportunity of being led in right paths is afforded, but rejected.

So was it with Judah. They refused the guidance of

Jotham. "Jotham did that which was right in the sight of the Lord. . . . BUT THE PEOPLE DID YET CORRUPTLY." 2 Chron. xxvii. 2. The voice of the people was found to be anything rather than "the voice of God." The people withstood the voice of God. They did corruptly.

No doubt if Jotham had been more uncompromisingly stern—if he had refused to spare "the high places and the groves," and had swept them all away, he would have prospered more. Compromise can never subserve the ends of Holiness and Truth: all that it does is to strengthen evil by affording occasion and encouragement to its continued development. Nevertheless the personal faithfulness of Jotham was not unacknowledged; "he became mighty because he prepared his ways before the Lord his God." 2 Chron. xxvii. 6. Yet notwithstanding this recognition of the uprightness of Jotham, the persistent progress of the people's evil came also in remembrance before God, so that even in Jotham's reign preparation for its punishment was made. "In those days the Lord *began to send* against Judah, Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah." Nevertheless Jotham was taken to sleep with his fathers before the gathering storm was allowed to break.

Ahaz succeeded Jotham. In him the people found a leader suited to the desire of their hearts. Under him the mind of society in Judah—"public opinion" as it is called, could duly develop itself. "Ahaz walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made also molten

images for Baalim. Moreover he burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and burnt his children in the fire, after the abominations of the heathen whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel. He sacrificed also and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree." 2 Chron. xxviii. 2—4. Yet Ahaz in doing these things did but reflect the character of Judah—privileged, favoured, enlightened Judah. It was grateful to them to be placed under this leadership for evil. They desired it. Head and heart were alike diseased.

The storm therefore which had gathered in the days of Jotham, was now allowed to break on the head of Ahaz. "The Lord his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria; and they smote him, and carried away a great multitude of them captives, and brought them to Damascus. And he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who smote him with a great slaughter. For Pekah, the son of Remaliah, slew in Judah an hundred and twenty thousand in one day, which were all valiant men; because they had forsaken the Lord God of their fathers." 2 Chron. xxviii. 5. Nor was this all. Encouraged by success, the hosts of Syria and of Israel united themselves, and advanced together against Jerusalem itself: they were not, however, permitted to prevail. "And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz, son of Jotham, son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin, king of Aram [Syria], and Pekah, son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up to Jerusalem to war against it, but he could not war against it (i. e. so as



to succeed). And it was told the house of David, saying, There resteth Aram [Syria] on Ephraim, and there shook his [the king's] heart, and the heart of his people, like the shaking of the trees of the wood before the wind." Thus the chapter before us opens.

Dark indeed and evil was the condition of Jerusalem: yet this was the very sphere for which Isaiah had been sanctified, that in it (after his lips had been touched by the live coal from the altar) he might act for and with God. From Uzziah's reign onward he had seen evil steadily progressing, and now (notwithstanding the chastisements that had been sent) he beheld it advancing still. During this lengthened period, no public act is recorded of him. Deserted and despised, save by a very few, he wept, no doubt, in secret places. But now the time was come for him to act. He was sent to meet Ahaz in the day of his calamity, with a message from the Lord. It was a message of goodness and compassion. "Then said the Lord unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shearjashub thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field." Isaiah went, and Shearjashub stood by his side.

Shearjashub and Mahershalalhashbaz (see next chapter) are the symbolic names of the two children of Isaiah. The latter is a name of woe and of judgment. It conveys the thought of the spoiler hastened on by God to his appointed work of rapine and ruin. Mahershalalhashbaz may be taken as the superscription of all those parts of Isaiah's prophecy that speak of Israel and

of Judah as smitten and desolated. This desolation was soon about to begin: it continues still, and will not end until the Land of Immanuel shall once more be brought under the outstretching of the dark wings of the last great Assyrian—Antichrist. “The spreading out of his wings shall be the filling of the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel.” The force of the word, *Mahershalalhashbaz*, therefore, is not yet spent. It is still to be kept before our eyes. Forget it, and we shall soon lose ourselves in darkness. On the other hand, *Shearjashub* [a remnant shall return] is a name of consolation. Our eye rests upon *Shearjashub* first, before we hear of *Mahershalalhashbaz*. We are cheered by a view of the final joy before we hear of the antedecent sorrow. Moreover, although the immediate object of this name is to assure us of mercies yet to come—mercies still hidden in the womb of time, yet faith also discerns in it the pledge of present blessing: for as there shall be a remnant preserved and borne through the day of fiery visitation, (*Zech. xiii. 9.*) and made God’s witnesses in the millennial earth, so now also, there is, and ever has been, a remnant, (this is as true in Gentile Christendom as in Israel) whom grace preserves in the midst of the moral darkness that broods, and will brood over the earth, on to the very end of the Day of man—a remnant watched over by the Lord, and taught of His Spirit—a remnant that might be (save for their own wilfulness and worldliness) gathered into a place of honoured separateness like unto that which pertained to *Shearjashub* as he stood by the side of Isaiah, sharing the lot,

and identified with the testimony of God's blessed, but rejected servant.

The place in which Isaiah was directed to meet Ahaz, was one well suited to a message of mercy. It was in the fuller's field, by the side of a stream that flowed from beneath the sides of Zion and Moriah. Zion was the mountain of Jerusalem's strength. Its citadel was there. And Moriah (which virtually was one with Zion) was the mountain of Truth, for on it the Temple stood. Think of what Zion will be in that future day, when streams of blessing issuing thence shall fill the whole earth with gladness. Think how it will be recognised then as the place where Heaven's almighty power will have associated itself with Heaven's pure Truth, in order that that Truth might not only be diffused throughout the earth, but maintained in its rightful supremacy. But what Zion will be in the day of its glory, that Zion measurably has already been. *There* God's mighty power operated of old: *there* it watched over and guarded Jerusalem, His chosen City—"the City of the great King." Thence too, have emanated the blessings which we, Gentiles, now receive. "Salvation is of the Jews." The stream that Ahaz beheld silently and softly flowing from beneath Zion, symbolized a power of ceaseless blessing that was steadily bearing on Jerusalem, and which has not, even now, been taken from the earth. The stream of grace that has come forth from Zion, flows steadily still through the world's wide wilderness—unnoticed often, or else seen only to be despised. There are, however, some—a remnant, a little flock,

whose eyes are opened to discern what it is, and whence it comes; and they rejoice in it, and drink of it, and find in it the waters of healing, and of cleansing, and of eternal life.

How was that stream needed by Jerusalem and her people! Daily it sustained them, for they drank thereof, and without it they could have had no "fuller's field;" The fuller's field was the place of cleansing—the place where uncleanness was washed away, and the defiled garment made white. What thoughts are more grateful to the conscience-stricken sinner than those associated with the fuller's field? It was the waters of Siloam that gave to Jerusalem the fuller's field. Thus, too, was supplied that wondrous pool, which up to the time when Immanuel came, remained in Jerusalem as the one solitary witness that the miraculous power of God had not utterly forsaken the still beloved City. The pool of Siloam\* continued to bear witness to the presence of God's power to heal, until it was superseded by that mightier power of healing—healing unto eternal life which is found in that "fountain which has been opened for sin and for all uncleanness" in the blood of Immanuel. Yet notwithstanding all this, the waters of Siloam were by Ahaz and his people rejected, and the river of Assyria chosen.

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\* "*Siloah*," says Dr. Eadie, "mentioned in Neh. iii. 15, or *Siloam* (John ix. 7), or *Shiloah* (Is. viii. 6), is a rivulet at the foot of Zion and Moriah. It formed two pools, called the 'upper pool' (Is. vii. 3), or 'King's pool' (Neh. ii. 14), and the lower pool" (Is. xxii. 9). One of these pools is mentioned John ix. 7. See Dr. Eadie's *Biblical Cyclopædia*, words, *Siloam* and *Conduit*.

Could the petty stream that flowed through the fuller's field be compared with the waters, "strong and many," of Euphrates? Ahaz answered, No: and many an Ahaz-like heart at this present moment re-echoes the judgment. The rill that flows softly from Zion is spurned, and men hasten to drink of the waters of the river of Babylon. Truly they shall drink thereof: but those waters shall be to them as "the bitter water that causeth the curse, that entereth" into the bowels, causing the "belly to swell, and the thigh to rot." What a contrast between those waters of death, and the waters which they have despised—waters of life—waters whose real source is "the Throne of God and of the Lamb!"

The fuller's field, therefore, watered by the waters of Siloam, was a place well suited for that message of mercy which Isaiah was sent to deliver to the terrified House of David. Although stricken, they were not abandoned. The Lord their God was still near—able and willing to give them cleansing, and healing, and strength. And in order that they might know this, and prove the greatness of His long-suffering mercy, He sent Isaiah with Shearjashub (that name itself a pledge of the faithfulness of His love), and bade him stand by the symbolic waters of Siloam, and there to speak words of encouragement to the cowed and trembling heart of Ahaz. "Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither let thy heart quail before these two smoking fire-brands—at the heat of the wrath of Rezin and Syria, and of the son of Remaliah." However fiercely

these fire-brands have flamed against thee; however thou mayest have felt the power of their burning, yet fear not, neither be dismayed. They have well nigh burned themselves out; they are now tails of fire-brands merely. Though they have taken counsel against thee, and are working out their plans and think that they have thee in their grasp, yet their counsel shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass. The heads of Syria and of Israel are Damascus and Samaria, and the heads of Damascus and Samaria are Rezin and Remaliah's son, but has Judah no head? Such was the implied question. The answer should have been, yea, Judah hath a Head. The Head of Judah is Jerusalem, and the Head of Jerusalem is Jehovah of Hosts. Let Syria and Israel rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son, but we will rejoice in Jehovah of Hosts our God. Such should have been the answer: such would have been the answer of faith. But such an answer was in vain waited for from the lips of Ahaz and his people, for they had no faith. They were terrified and they trembled; but the faithless heart when terrified seeks not unto God. It turns to other aid. Terror brought Saul to the witch of Endor: it drove Ahaz to the king of Assyria. Ahaz and his people had scanned carefully the troubled scene around them. They had considered the circumstances and formed their resolve; and that resolve was to make, not Jehovah but Assyria, the future stay and hope of Jerusalem: and the city that was soon to take the headship of Assyria was Babylon.

The resoluteness of this resolve was well known unto

God: yet for the sake of the remnant of His people whom He loved, and for the further manifestation of His mercy, and in order that He might yet further prove the rebellious House of David, He continued still to plead with Ahaz. "Moreover, Jehovah spake further [added to speak] unto Ahaz, saying, Ask for thee a sign from [from with, *παρα*] Jehovah thy God; make deep thy petition, or raise it up on high." So let thy doubting heart be confirmed. But Ahaz instantly replied, "I will not ask, neither will I tempt Jehovah." It was either hypocrisy cloaking its unwillingness to approach Jehovah under a pretended dread of presumption, or else it was the bold declaration of an impious resolve to make no trial of Jehovah—a refusal to have recourse either to His power, or to His mercy. "I will not ask, neither will I make trial of Jehovah." Ahaz had resolved to make trial of another. He had determined to make Assyria's king his refuge. How then could he trust in Jehovah? He could not trust in both: he could not lean on Jehovah, and on Assyria too. He must choose either one or the other, and he had already in his heart chosen Assyria. Such was the resolve of David's House; such the decision of its representative and head. The Lord God of Israel was deliberately rejected by them. "And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; is it a small thing for you [i.e. too little a thing to satisfy you] to weary men, that ye must weary my God also?" They should not indeed so weary Him as to prevent His giving (not indeed immediately, but as soon as the set time should come)

His great sign to the House of Israel and to the House of Judah. "Therefore Jehovah Himself [though ye refuse to ask] shall give you a sign ; behold the virgin pregnant and the bringer-forth of a child [this was the sign that should, in due time, be ; it was a thing that never had been, nor ever should be again] and she calleth his name Immanuel." Ahaz and the unbelieving house of Judah around him were not to live to see this sign. Seven hundred years were yet to pass before it should be given, but its promise was to all who feared the Lord ; a pledge that neither traitors from within, nor enemies from without, should succeed in destroying or blighting the hopes of David's House and of Jerusalem. Wickedness and apostasy might work within, and multiplied enemies might threaten from without, yet the House of David should not be destroyed, for how could that House be subverted into which Immanuel was to be born ? And although chastisement upon chastisement was about to come upon Israel and upon Judah, and upon their Land, so that it should be made desolate, yet it should not be so desolate as to be unable to supply to the Heir of David's House nourishment ; and nourishment that should be continued, so as for Him to attain to years of maturity and strength. No enemies, no power of man, or of Satan, should prevail so as to prevent the birth of Immanuel into the House of David, or to take from Him nourishment, or hinder His growth. As surely as He should be born, so surely should the Land, even the smitten Land of Israel, supply "butter and honey" for His use, so that He should be sheltered,



and cherished, and increased in wisdom and stature, and exercise understanding in distinguishing betwixt evil and good. Should the House of David tremble as if they were about to be utterly crushed by their enemies when they had this promise of the manifestation of Immanuel in their midst? Would they indeed persist in turning to Assyria, rather than unto Him who was undertaking to work these things for them?

Hearing, they heard not. Their ear was heavy: their eye closed: their heart fat. In vain, therefore, God spake to them of Immanuel—His great gift unto Israel and unto men. On the meritorious service of Immanuel, the TITLE of the people of God to all their blessings altogether rests. By His obedience and death they are justified. “By the knowledge of himself shall one that is righteous, my servant, bring righteousness unto the many: AND their iniquities he shall bear.”\* In His cross we find our altar (Heb. xiii. 10) whence has

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\* Such is the literal rendering of this most blessed verse, which I hope to consider farther on another occasion. The use of *οἱ πολλοὶ* and *κατασταθῆσονται δίκαιοι* in Rom. v. 19 is evidently derived from this verse. The Righteous One by His course of righteousness, commenced and finished on the earth, brings righteousness not to believers out of Israel merely, but to “the many”—mankind at large, if so be they have by faith “the knowledge of him.” The commencing word of the last clause is not *FOR—* *ἵνα*—a mistranslation which has led some to say that all that is needful to our justification is that Christ should bear our iniquities. The very object of the verse is to show that two things are needful to our justification, viz., that He as the Righteous One should bring to us righteousness, AND also that He should bear our iniquities.

ascended into the unseen sanctuary above the heavens, the sweet smelling savour of the one accepted Sacrifice under which we stand accepted according to its acceptableness,—precious according to its preciousness, now and for evermore. He hath earned for us life, and the life so earned by His obedience unto death, is given to us IN HIM. “By means of the righteousness” by Him provided (see Rom. v. 21) “grace reigns over us unto eternal life;” and by means of Him (see Rom. v. 17) we finally, are to “reign in life.” All this has been provided through the “one righteousness” of Immanuel. Thus has been opened, in the midst of the darkness and corruption of earth, the well-spring of everlasting life. In the passage before us, however, these things are not unfolded. The object of God was to declare to the House of David and to Jerusalem that, whatever their obduracy and unbelief, He would still persevere in His counsel, and fulfil the great purpose of His grace in giving Immanuel. His great sign should be given though they might persist in despising it. And lest any should say, the sign is too distant—it is afar off; we want a nearer pledge; a nearer pledge was given. The Prophet went on to declare that before any one who was then a child in years (whether the child who stood by Isaiah’s side, or any other child) should attain to age of understanding and know to distinguish between evil and good, the Land of Israel, before the two mighty leaders whereof Ahaz trembled, should be forsaken. And so it came to pass. Before any one then in childhood came to years of discretion, Israel sank

before the mighty power of Assyria. See 2 Kings xv. 29, and xvii. 3. Here then were tokens of God's present power yet working in mercy in the midst of His people. Ahaz, indeed, and the House of David, and Jerusalem, heeded it not. But Isaiah, and a remnant in Israel, saw and understood, and trusted, and found in quietness and in confidence their strength. So was it then: so is it now. So must it be in every dispensation in which the many who profess to see, see not; and when it can be said of a little flock only, "Blessed are your eyes for they see; and your ears for they hear."

The sin of Ahaz, however, was not to remain unpunished. "Jehovah will bring upon thee and on thy people, and on thy father's house, days that have not come since the departure of Ephraim from Judah, even the king of Assyria." Ahaz had made the king of Assyria his refuge. He had hired him as a razor whereby he would shave off from Israel and from Syria all that gave to them comeliness and strength. And in this he succeeded: Israel and Syria were shorn, and Ahaz and his people "rejoiced against [see next chapter] Rezin and Remaliah's son;" for they saw them fall—irrevocably fall. So far Ahaz triumphed. But this razor that he had hired, and used so successfully, was soon to be turned in all its terrible sharpness upon himself. "In the same day shall the Lord shave with a razor hired in the parts beyond the river, that is to say, by the king of Assyria, the head, and the hair of the feet: and also the beard shall it [the razor] take away." Thus the Land of Judah too was to know desolation.

It too should be denuded of its people, so that only a residue should be left. The natural luxuriance of the Land should indeed for a season supply that remnant with more than plenty. "It shall come to pass in that day, that a man shall save alive [i.e. shall rescue from the grasp of the enemy] a young cow and two sheep : and it shall be from the abundance of the yielding of milk [because of the luxuriance of the pastures that shall plentifully spring up in the depopulated Land] he shall eat butter : for butter and honey shall every one eat that is left in the midst of the Land."

The native luxuriance of a depopulated land would of course supply for a season superabundance of nourishment to those who sought merely *to live*, and who were content to dispense with the corn-field, and the vineyard, and the fruitful garden, if only enough to sustain them in life could be obtained from the flock, or from the herd. The corn-field, and the vineyard, and the garden, require that there should be many a hand to sow and to plant, to prune and to water, and this cannot be in a depopulated land. Yet a depopulated land may easily, to a few, become a place of rest. A rescued few, abundantly supplied with all that is *necessary* for life, may soon settle down into full contentment with their portion, and console themselves for the loss of the vineyard or the garden by the reflection, that although not supplied with their fruits, they are nevertheless relieved from many responsibilities and anxieties and toils. Yet to expect a sabbatism in the midst of a desolation sent in chastisement by God, is but a deceiving

dream. There are such things as thorns and briars: and are not thorns and briars sure to dominate in any land where cultivation ceaseth? Where man ceaseth to labour, thorns and briars will soon reign. They will spread not only over the desolate vineyard, but over the pastures too. Wild beasts of the desert and all devouring monsters will lurk there. Terror will reign there as well as desolation. "With arrows and with bows will men come there, because all the Land shall become briars and thorns." It is not permitted, therefore, to God's people to dispense at their will with the cultivated vineyard, and to say that they will content themselves with the uncultivated pasture. If they have not the vineyard, they must have the forest, full of danger and the power of destruction as well as of desolation. If there be no hand to plant the garden there will be none to withstand the briar.

And now (not to speak of Israel) can we look on the present condition of Christendom and be blind to the extent of the moral desolation? The people of Christ were gathered once in godly unity—unity that was godly, because it was unity *in the Truth*. Their habits, and doctrines, and ways, were expressive of the mind of Christ. They were epistles of Christ known and read of all men. Christendom was the land of Truth. There were many then, strong and wise to labour—able to break the fallow ground, to sow and to plant, to water and to prune. Consequently, there was many a vineyard, many a smiling corn-field, many a fruitful garden. But now how changed the scene! None who

are able to contrast darkness with light, truth with falsehood, can be unconscious of the present ruin. Yet many console themselves. They say, what though that bright shining of light whose presence once marked the heritage of the Lord be gone; what though associated strength has given place to isolated weakness, yet the remnant of God's people, however few or feeble, cannot perish. They shall surely be preserved in the Land, and find nourishment sufficient to preserve their soul in life; and if that be so, is it not a sufficient mercy? Let consciousness, therefore, of what we have, cause oblivion of what we have not. The gospel net is still cast; it still gathereth of every kind; and although the sheep of Christ may not be either folded or fed as once they were; though they may be a scattered and wandering flock; yet they shall surely find something whereon to feed, and ultimately all shall pass into the everlasting fold. Let us be content, therefore, and be thankful. Has not a tone of feeling like this extensively prevailed? Yet surely the preservation of our spiritual life is not the only question that is to be present to the hearts of God's people. The interests and honour of God, as well as our instruction and edification, are essentially connected with the circumstances and manner in which that life is developed. If the methods of God require that there should be the cultivated corn-field or the vineyard, His purposes will not be answered by our willingness to content ourselves with the luxuriance of spontaneous vegetation. Nevertheless we have sought to do this, and to find, as it were, a sabbatism in the

midst of ruin. We have said, God's people shall surely live : how or on what they are fed, matters little. But the unconcern of indifferentism is not the repose of faith. Our carelessness, therefore, respecting the corn-field and the vineyard—our indifference as to whether the children of God do, or do not, know and walk in the Truth, is being punished by the rapid increase of "thorns and briars." Spots vacated by Truth will be occupied by Apostasy ; and where the servants of Christ cease to labour in their appointed manner, there the servants of the Devil will soon make manifest their power. Some seem at last to be awakened to a consciousness of this. Individual quietness and repose which have been so inordinately prized, are found to be imperilled almost in every home by the inroad of deadly falsehoods. The arrow and the bow are being assumed by many a hitherto inert hand : and they who have refused to encounter Falsehood in its incipency, find to their sorrow that they are obliged to meet it in its augmented strength. It is true, now, and will be increasingly true, till the end comes, that the instructed servants of Christ, themselves few and feeble, move throughout that which should have been the Land of Truth, not expecting to find "orchards of pomegranates with pleasant fruits ; or vines with their tender grapes giving a good smell ;" but expecting and finding forests of thorns and briars—strongholds of apostasy, where forms of falsehood lurk more terrible and more destructive than the fangs of the lion or the bear. They move, therefore, armed. The bow and the arrow are in their hand.

They slay, or seek to slay enemies where they once gathered fruits.

Yet the dark picture is not *altogether* unrelieved. However terrible the scourge that may be sent upon God's people, however their heritage may be laid waste, yet grace never permits that the desolation should be *total*. Great and terrible was the desolation that the passage before us describes; yet in the midst of the wide wilderness of ruin, the hand that sowed and that cultivated was not altogether wanting. And so is it still. There are yet some spots, isolated and almost unknown, removed, as some high hill-summit, far away from the haunts of men, where patient, and not altogether unrequited labour may yet be found. The circumstances may be unpropitious; the ordinary appliances of cultivation may be wanting. It may be the wearying labour of the mattock, rather than the less toilsome labour of the plough. Yet the mattock can successfully withstand the thorn. "It shall come to pass that on all hills, that shall be digged with the mattock, there shall not come thither the fear of briars and thorns." Apostasy cannot reign where they who abide in Christ's truth patiently labour. "Who then is that faithful and wise servant whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household to give them their portion of meat in due season." There ever have been, and to the end there shall be some such. "Blessed is that servant whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing." There, and there only, shall spots of fruitfulness be found. Even the pastures may elsewhere perish; but they shall not perish there. "There



shall not come there the fear of briars and thorns ; but it shall be for the sending forth of cattle, and for the treading place for sheep.”

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## NOTES ON ISAIAH VII.

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### VERSES 1 AND 2.

*And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz, son of Jotham, son of Uzziah king of Judah, [that] Rezin, king of Aram, [Syria] and Pekah, son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up to Jerusalem to war against it, but he could not war [i.e. war successfully] against it. And it was told the House of David, saying, There resteth Aram [Syria] on Ephraim. And there shook his heart [i.e. the king's heart], and the heart of his people, like the shaking of the trees of a wood before the wind.*

*Went up to Jerusalem to war against it.]* In order to gain instruction from the past history of Israel, it is not necessary (nor indeed is it possible) to trace out an historic parallelism betwixt their course and ours. Conscience can discern in the past many an illustration of the present, even though there be no such exact or continuous similarity as to make the one history a strict typical counterpart of the other. The instruction conveyed in such a chapter as that we are now considering is founded on analogy—analogy being a resemblance of the *relations* in which certain things stand to other things, and not implying similarity in the things them-

selves. Many a person now may stand to Truth and its servants, in a relation resembling that which Jezebel held towards Elijah, or Ahaz towards Isaiah : but this does not imply that those persons are in all respects like Jezebel or Ahaz, or that they who are persecuted and despised are in all respects like Elijah or Isaiah. Analogy is a resemblance of relations merely.

Is there not a marked similarity between the relation that Judah held towards corrupt and idolatrous Israel, and that occupied by Protestantism towards the rest of idolatrous Christendom ? Protestantism *in profession* is Bible Christianity. Against Protestantism idolatrous Romanism and Liberalism are now uniting their strength, just as Israel and Syria, in godless concord, threatened Judah and Jerusalem. Protestantism has its *true* and also its Ahaz-like defenders. Its true defenders are few : nor at present are even its Ahaz-like defenders numerous.

But they are likely to increase. Men will probably soon discern that many of their most valued privileges (liberty, order, and the like) are bound up with the maintenance of what they call Protestantism. They will see that the Scripture cannot be utterly cast out without many a temporal blessing being cast out with it. Even democratic Dissent is not so thoroughly blinded as to be unconscious of this. Accordingly, after a few more triumphs of Idolatry and Liberalism, we shall probably see a more extended desire to rally around the banner of nominal Protestantism. But who will be its defenders ? Will they be men who fear God

and love His Truth, and who desire to purge Protestantism from its corruptions and secularization, or men who base their hopes for the future on intellectuality, education, moral culture, social progress, civilization, and the like? Such men are wont to judge of their position by comparing it with some of the advanced forms of evil around them, rather than by viewing it in its relation to God and to His Truth. The tone of their spirits, therefore, is boastful rather than humble. They affirm that society (notwithstanding the presence of some temporarily threatening clouds) is steadily advancing. They have great confidence in the future. "Magna est veritas et prævalebit." A good time is coming. You may speak to them of *Shearjashub* and of a *remnant* only being spared, but they who are bent on universality will not hear of *remnants*. And as respects *Mahershalalhashbaz*, no thought is more utterly abhorrent to their souls than that. They are confident of coming prosperity and triumph. Shall they listen to idle tales respecting judgment and woe? It is the talk of fools.

Not that they are unconscious of the necessity of *some* change. They see that the ground whereon they have hitherto sought to stand will serve them no longer; and therefore they look around for some pillar on which they can lean for the future. Enlightened public opinion is their hope. Religious truth must not be abandoned, but it must be moulded anew, and accommodated to enlightened public opinion. This may involve the abandonment of creeds and confessions, and

all stereotyped forms of thought, but that will be an advantage. Truth and Scripture must be made to have a certain elasticity and pliability—the times demand this: and orthodoxy, if it cannot continue to hold a measure of iron, must be content with a more flexible rule of lead. Yet what is all this but a discarding and abandonment of God? The very object of the Scripture is to stereotype Truth. Flexibility may suit well the treacherous compromising indifferentism of man, but it has no place in the legislation of God.

God may speak to such men of the stream bringing cleansing and life that flows gently around them from Zion, the mountain of *grace*, but that stream they esteem too little, too restricted in its diffusion, and too uncertain in its results to be of practical value in an hour like this. Salvation, full, free and everlasting, through the substitutional obedience and suffering of a Sin-bearer, is a basis too narrow for those who wish for a system of world-wide comprehensiveness. The stream of Siloam that flows softly will not satisfy those who long after the waters of Euphrates, “strong and mighty.” The coming manifestation of Immanuel in glory, and the events connected therewith, may be declared to them, but such things are no more heeded than were the words spoken by Isaiah to Ahaz respecting the birth of Immanuel as the Virgin’s son. Doctrines like these (say they) whether true or false, go contrary to the present flow of human thought. If taught, they would be rejected, and what value is there in that which is resultless? Utility is the true measure

of value, and that only is useful which commands influence. Put before us truth that is influential—influential that is for *our* purposes, and we will hear it; but trouble us not with anything besides. Such is the temper of these men. They are no more disposed to prove Jehovah than was Ahaz.

Ahaz found his Babylon, and they of whom I speak, will (soon probably) find theirs. A system is arising before which the lordly *dominance* of Ecclesiasticism as well as the incoherency and disorder of Liberalism will give way. Antichristianism, when it first forms itself into a system, though it will allow a wide scope to religious thought, will, nevertheless, effectually *rule*, and forcibly restrain all action that is deemed to be socially disturbing. Ahaz-like men who simply think of escape from present danger, and of having old and dreaded enemies smitten, will, no doubt, hail the advent of this system as the advent of a friend: but it will array in fuller and more extensive combination than ever, the powers of falsehood against the weakened citadel of Truth. A system of concord based on Truthlessness must rage against the unbending rigidity of Truth; and Truth has not many defenders, nor are they strong. Yet there are, and there shall be to the end, some who discern betwixt the still stream that flows from Zion, and the waters of the river of Babylon—who love the one, and hate the other. Happy are they. Whatever comes, blessing rests upon their heads for evermore, though they may eat the bread of affliction, or share the dungeon of Jeremiah.

## VERSES 3 TO 9.

*And Jehovah said unto Isaiah, the son of Amos, Go out to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shearjashub thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, at the highway of the fuller's field. And thou shalt say to him, Take heed [literally, be observant, i.e. of my message to thee from Jehovah], and be quiet, fear not, and let not thy heart quail [literally, be soft] before these two smoking tails of fire-brands, at the heat of the wrath of Resin and Syria, and of the son of Remaliah. Because Syria has purposed evil against thee (and so have Ephraim and Remaliah's son), saying, Let us go up unto Judah, and vex it, and make a breach in it for ourselves, and let us make a king in the midst thereof, to wit, the son of Tabeal. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, it shall not stand, and it shall not be. For the head of Aram is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Resin, for in yet sixty and five years shall Ephraim be broken from being a people. For the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son. If ye will not believe [know ye] that ye shall not be established.*

*Let us go up unto Judah and vex it.]* Marvellous was the mercy that thus lingered around Jerusalem, partly (as now in Gentile Christendom) because of the remnant according to the election of grace; yet not solely on that account. From the Jews there was to come salvation. From the House of David was to be born "the Saviour which is Christ the Lord." Until Immanuel had come, they were not to be uprooted from their Land. He was emphatically "THE Fruit of THE Land;"

and by that Land He was to be nourished. See verse fifteen.

Moreover, Israel is yet to be the chief of all nations. It is the nation through which all other nations shall be in the coming age, regulated and governed. "Unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem." Micah iv. 8. No such destiny is in store for Gentile Christendom. For eighteen hundred years and more, the chief, and indeed the sole place of testimony to Truth in the earth has been committed to it. But it has utterly failed. It has been the great corrupter of Truth. Not having continued in God's goodness it shall be broken out of the olive tree in which it has long been as a cankered branch; and though God's mercies, for the sake of the remnant that are in it, do and will linger around it till the end, yet as an economy it is doomed, and will pass away under judgment.

Yet Gentile Christendom still dreams that a promise of indefectible standing in the earth is made to it. Where is such a promise made? The words are, "If thou continuest in God's goodness well, otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." Has Christendom continued in God's goodness? Let facts and Scripture answer that question. The only body that has a promise of indefectible standing *in the earth* is Israel in the next dispensation. *They*, when once they shall have been restored unto God, shall stand His firm and faithful witnesses in the earth until all earthly dispensations end.

As respects Protestantism, it is very evident that in



Western Europe, the great sphere of its past influence, it is encompassed by dangers closely analogous to those that threatened Judah in the chapter before us. But even if God were to proffer His gracious aid as distinctly as He proffered it to Ahaz, would not the result be the same? Would it not be distinctly declined? Men who have formed their own plans of defence, will never welcome the proposals of God.

One would scarcely have expected that Judah—privileged, favoured Judah, would have been they who should have first brought in the power of Assyria and Babylon to crush, first Israel, and then themselves. Yet so it was. It was not Israel but Judah that appealed to Assyria. And when Immanuel came, it was Jerusalem that crucified Him. So now; it is in favoured Protestant lands that we find those principles chiefly cherished that are bringing in the reign of truthless, godless Secularism.

It is this that will hate and defy Christ and His Truth in a manner in which He has never yet been hated and defied, and then the end will come.

*It shall not stand, and it shall not be, FOR the head of Aram is Damascus, &c. FOR in yet sixty and five years shall Ephraim be broken from being a people, &c.]* The twice repeated FOR prefaces the two reasons why it (i.e. the device formed against Judah) should not prevail. It shall not be, FOR Aram has no better head than Damascus and Rezin. Are they strong enough to prevail against Jerusalem and Jehovah?

Again, "it shall not be," FOR Israel, Judah's enemy shall itself be broken from being a people. And what else could they look for, seeing that they have no better headship than Samaria and Remaliah's son?—whereas the head of Judah is Jerusalem, and the Head of Jerusalem, Jehovah of Hosts. It is not unfrequent in Scripture to see successive reasons given for the same statement. See Matt. xxiv. 26, 27, 28, where the two latter verses give successive reasons for the statement in verse 26.

*In yet sixty and five years, &c.*] "From the destruction of the Syrians to the full carrying away captive of the Israelites, or from the time of this prophecy, sixty-five years must have run out; for although the Kingdom of Israel was abolished in the sixth year of Hezekiah, yet Israel did not immediately cease to be a people when only some part of it was carried away, but they entirely ceased to be a people when new colonies were introduced by Esarhaddon." This was in the twenty-second year of Manasseh. See Junius and Tremellius, and Prideaux, as quoted by Gill in locum.

#### VERSES 10 TO 16.

*And Jehovah further spake unto Ahaz saying, Ask for thee a sign from Jehovah thy God, make thy petition deep, or raise it high above. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I prove Jehovah. And he said, Hear I pray you, O House of David, is it too little for you to weary men, that you must weary my God. Therefore the Lord*

*Himself will give you a sign. Behold the Virgin pregnant and the bringer-forth of a son, and she calleth his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good: for before the child [i.e. any one who is now a child] shall know to refuse the evil, and to choose the good, forsaken shall be the land before the face of whose two kings thou art distressed.*

*Ask for thee a sign.]* As regards the general exposition of this passage, I do not know that it is necessary to add anything to that which has been said in the preceding observations. See page 218. It seems strange that any one should suppose that "the child" mentioned in verse 16 refers to Immanuel as promised in verse 14. The object of the 16th verse is to supply a *present* pledge, on the part of God for the accomplishment of His promises touching Immanuel—the fulfilment of which promise was to be long delayed. The manifest necessity therefore of explaining the 16th verse of something then present forbids its being applied to Immanuel. It would be far more plausible to refer it to Shearjashub. But this is not necessary. Calvin rightly says, "I do not interpret this word of Christ, but as a general expression denoting children as a class." \*

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\* Ego itaque hoc verbum non interpretor de Christo, sed de pueris omnibus in genere; in quo ab omnibus dissentio. . . . Ego autem accipio *לְנֶפֶשׁ* collective, ut *לְ* sit quidem notitæ causâ additum, tamen ad demonstrandam potius ætatem quam certum aliquem puerum: ut cum vulgò dicimus. *L'enfant*, et articulum *le* majoris notitiæ causâ addimus; atque et Scripturæ satis usitatum est.—*Calvin in locum.*

For a similar example of **נַעַר** used indefinitely, see Isaiah lxxv. 20. "The child shall die a hundred years old." For the use of **נַעַר** in the sense of "child," see Exodus ii. 6, where it is applied to Moses when found by Pharaoh's daughter — "behold the babe wept." See also Isaiah ix. 6.

*The Lord Himself shall give you a sign.]* As it was when Immanuel came, so was it when His birth was prophetically announced, and so is it still. The light given was rejected. Yet there was, and is, and shall be, a remnant who have ability to recognize and walk in the light. This remnant Shearjashub represented.

Yet they who belong to this remnant do not necessarily occupy the place of Shearjashub as he stood by the side of God's rejected servant. To be of the Truth, and to be practically identified with the place it holds among men, are two different things.

The sorrow of the present moment would not be what it is, if we saw the remnant of God's people, courageously and intelligently advancing into the position to which Truth leads. But is it so? How many a snare has been laid by Satan to entrap God's unwary servants as they begin to seek after better paths. Many may leave the side of Ahaz, and yet not find the side of Isaiah.

Satan can put on the garb of an angel of light, and his ministers are as himself. "By fair words and smooth speeches they deceive the hearts of the simple." Nor can the deceit be detected or the spell broken, save by

a careful and intelligent use of the Word of God. "Every one that leadeth forward"\* (and how many there are who profess to lead onward into higher and better paths)—"Every one that leadeth forward and abideth not in THE DOCTRINE of Christ hath not God." 2 John 9. How little are these words remembered! Many now speak contemptuously of doctrine. They say that they can abide in Christ without concerning themselves with doctrine. But they cannot. "He that abideth in THE DOCTRINE of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." Wherever the Word of God is not vigilantly and intelligently adhered to, falsehood will prevail: and no acceptable worship or service can be rendered where falsehood reigns. "If ye abide in me, and *my words abide in you*, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." John xv. 7. High words and proud pretensions will be greatly checked if we remember such words as these. It is a merey that from the days of Montanus to the present hour, proud pretensions have been more or less characterised by departure from the faith. So a beacon is afforded to those who cleave to, and use the Word of God.

VERSE 17 TO 25.

*Jehovah will bring on thee and on thy people and on thy father's House days that have not come since the departure of Ephraim from Judah, even the King of Assyria. And it shall be in that day that Jehovah shall hiss for the fly*

\* Ὁ προαγων. Such is the true reading. Προαγειν dicitur ductor exercitus cum agmine procedens. *Stephens.*

*that is in the end [edge] of the rivers of Egypt and for the bee which is in Assyria. And they come and rest all of them in the desolate valleys and in the clefts of the rocks and in all thorn hedges and in all pastures. In that day will the Lord shave by a razor hired in the parts beyond the river (Euphrates) by the king of Assyria the head and the hair of the feet and also the beard shall it (the razor) take away. And it shall be in that day that a man shall save [keep alive] a young cow and two sheep; and it shall be from the abundance of the yielding of milk, he shall eat butter; for butter and honey shall every one eat that is left in the midst of the Land. And it shall be in that day, every place where there are a thousand vines at a thousand silverlings shall be for thorns and briars. With arrows and with bow shall one go thither, because thorns and briars shall the whole Land be. But all hills that are digged with the mattock, there shall not come there the fear of briars and thorns, but it shall be for a sending-place of cattle and a trampling-place of sheep.*

For a moment the schemes of Ahaz prospered. He and his people beheld their dreaded enemies fall before the king of Assyria, and they rejoiced. But short-lived was their joy. Calamity upon calamity came on them. "The Lord brought Judah low because of Ahaz king of Israel; for he made Judah naked, and transgressed sore against the Lord. And Tilgathpineser king of Assyria came unto him, and distressed him, but strengthened him not." 2 Chron. xxviii.

19, 20. The result was that desolation (checked occasionally by interventions of mercy from the hand of God) steadily advanced until the picture drawn in the chapter before us began to be realized. The desolation is very great when the hedges that defend, and the pastures that are defended, are alike destroyed.

The defenders of nominal Protestantism are, as I have already observed, not unconscious of being threatened by two mighty foes. They have on the one hand the imperious demands of idolatrous Ecclesiasticism; on the other, the violence of revolutionary self-will. What then is their hope against these mighty, and for the present, confederated foes? They hope in Public Opinion. Yet what is Public Opinion save the expression of the mind of unregenerate man, swayed and directed by Satan? No doubt a time is drawing nigh when the exclusiveness of Ecclesiasticism will be made to give way, and when the licentiousness of Liberalism will be curbed. The object of Satan is to direct the concentrated force of humanity against God, and concentration of power is not found in revolutionary confusion; nor is the restrictive circle of Ecclesiasticism sufficiently wide for a comprehensiveness that is to include that which the Scripture calls *Ἡ οἰκουμένη*. Many a worldly careless Protestant is anticipating with joy the reign of godless Secularism—the child of enlightened public opinion, when government shall be made at last the expression of the mind of society. But what will such Secularism be in relation to Truth? It will only be a many headed hydra,

directing all its energy, all its appliances, against the people and the Truth of the living God. If Isaiah, or Paul, or John, were at this moment to re-appear, Public Opinion would instantly crush them, or consign them to Patmos.

I do not by any means deny that Ahaz-like principles have been for ages working; but as the end approaches they will develop themselves more and more. There never surely was a period when men seemed more eager than now to renounce dependence on God, and to lean on Godlessness. Yet when has there been a period at which God has manifested more mercy in giving light, not only as to the Gospel, which has been preached with wonderful clearness,\* but also as to the things that are soon about to be? The veil has, in a peculiar manner, been withdrawn from the future, and the coming darkness and the coming glory have been testified to with a clearness which none but Ahaz-like hearts could dare to despise. Yet where Truth has chiefly sojourned, there darkness will with most intensity reign. Thorns and briars are rapidly spreading, and will surely dominate. Nevertheless, the searching eye of faith is able to find in the midst of the ruin, some spots where a measure of fruitfulness yet is—where the fear of briars and thorns cometh not. There are, and there shall be places where the darkening, desolating, corroding thoughts of men give place to the testimonies of the Word of the living

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\* See for example "*THE WAY OF PEACE*," by Dr. Horatius Bonar.



God. Wherever that is so, *there* shall be fruitfulness that no power of the enemy shall destroy. It shall be blessed here ; it shall be for blessing, and honour, and glory in the great final day.

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## THOUGHTS ON ISAIAH VIII. & IX. 1—7.

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THE next division of the prophecy commencing with the eighth chapter, extends to the seventh verse of the ninth chapter inclusive. The scope is comprehensive. Beginning at the time then present, when Isaiah stood as the witness of God in the midst of the advancing evil, it passes on to the time when a greater than Isaiah, even the Holy One Himself, succeeded His servant in the place of lowly and rejected testimony, and became Himself the despised Witness for Truth. Christ was emphatically "the faithful Witness." Rev. i. 5. "I," said He, "have *for this* been born, and *for this* have come into the world, that I might bear witness to the Truth." But He was not only a Witness. He came also to be a Sanctuary. *That* was the great need of His people. They needed a place where they could meet God in peace, and worship and serve Him for ever, under the shelter of accepted sacrifice. He came to be their shelter; and to Him "the remnant," the "poor of the flock" sought—and still seek. *Their* place is next described. They are His "disciples"—instructed and guided by Him in the midst of the prevailing darkness. They too are the constituted guardians of His Truth; for the Law and the Testimony is com-

mitted to their charge. "Bind up the testimony; seal the law among my disciples." They were, moreover, Jehovah's children; and as such committed to the care of Immanuel, and associated with Him throughout all the strife, and conflict, and sorrow of the "evil day." "Behold I and THE CHILDREN whom Jehovah hath given me, are for signs, and for wonders in Israel from Jehovah of Hosts, the dwelling-one in Mount Zion." Next is described that terrible and now approaching hour of consummated apostasy, when the forsakers of God, finding hope neither in heaven nor earth, shall turn to the Ohvoth\* and to wizards that peep and mutter, and plunge further and further into darkness until suddenly the Day of Light bursts on them in terror, and the Day of Man gives place unto the Day of God. Such is the outline of this passage. Its principles bear closely on ourselves; nor can the hour of final consummation be far distant.

Mahershalahashbaz is the name that prefaces this chapter—a name, as I have already said, pregnant with woe. Speed, spoil, haste, prey, are the thoughts included under it. Jerusalem under the leadership of Ahaz had deliberately rejected God and all His preferred mercies, and therefore Jerusalem was appointed for desolation. Enemies more terrible than any she had heretofore known were to be summoned to the spoil, and hastened to the prey. Woe was to follow upon woe until the Day of the Lord—that great and still future day of visitation, the day of burning and fuel

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\* See remarks on pages 74, 75.

of fire should come, and "Zion be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness."

Yet ominous as this name was of evil to Jerusalem, its *first* application was not to them, but to their enemies. The terror of the name Mahershalalhashbaz was first to be directed against Syria and Israel—the foes before whom Jerusalem and Ahaz had quailed. "Before the child shall know to cry, my father, and my mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away before the king of Assyria." Gratefully, therefore, must the name of Mahershalalhashbaz, at its first utterance, have fallen on the ear of Ahaz. It seemed to attest the success of his most cherished scheme, and to say to him, Go on and prosper. The razor that he had hired against Syria and Israel was to fulfil its work. The tablet inscribed "unto Mahershalalhashbaz," and the child of the Prophet bearing the same portentous name, were both before him as constituted signs that utter ruin shall soon overtake his enemies.

No doubt it was a day of proud exultation to the House of David and to Jerusalem, when they found that their device had prospered. They had summoned the king of Assyria to their aid: he came at their bidding, and they beheld their ancient enemies sink utterly before his power. Their scheme had prospered, and they were rejoicing with great joy, when suddenly the voice of the Lord again sounded in their midst. Before, in the day of their calamity, when the heart of their king, and their hearts were moved as the trees of the wood are shaken by the wind, Isaiah had been sent

to them with words of encouragement and mercy. Now, in the hour of their triumph, he again stood in their midst, not however with a message of mercy, but of judgment. They had despised the stream that flowed softly from beneath Zion, the mountain of their true strength, and instead thereof had sought to the waters of Euphrates, "strong and many." Therefore the lips of the Prophet were again opened. "Jehovah spake unto me yet again, saying, Forasmuch as this people [he refuses to call them by the too honourable name of Judah] hath forsaken the waters of Shiloah that flow softly, and [because] there is joy with respect to Rezin and Remaliah's son; [that is, joy over their destruction] therefore the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river that are strong, and that are many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he [the king, still spoken of under the emblem of the river] shall rise above all his channels, and go over all his banks: and he shall pass over into Judah; and shall overflow and pass through, even to the neck shall he reach; and the spreading of his wings shall be the filling of the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel." Such was to be the result unto Jerusalem. She had planned and achieved the ruin of her foes; but she had ruined herself also. The same wing of darkness that she had caused to be spread over Israel, was to be extended over herself likewise, until the whole land of Immanuel should be therewith shrouded. "The spreadings of his wings shall be the filling of the breadth of thy land O Immanuel."

But Immanuel is a name of joy, and triumph, and blessing. As such it was given; and so faith ever recognises it. Accordingly, as soon as that name had passed the lips of the Prophet, the strain of the prophecy changes. Another string is touched. Words of woe give place to the voice of triumph. The stream of prophetic denunciation is turned away from Jerusalem, and made to bear upon her enemies; for her enemies are also the enemies of Immanuel. Their strength, therefore, is defied: their doom pronounced. "Associate yourselves, O ye peoples, and be broken in pieces; and give ear ye, ye far off countries of earth: gird yourselves and be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and be broken in pieces. Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought: speak the word, and it shall not stand; for IMMANUEL." These words, so long since uttered, have not yet been fulfilled. They dwell still, even as they have ever dwelt, upon the lips of faith, but for their accomplishment we wait. They carry us onward into the future. We pass on from the then incipient hour of Jerusalem's sorrows to that future time when, begirt with confederated enemies more terrible than any that have yet assailed her, (see Joel ii., Is. xxix., Zech. xii.) she shall see them suddenly vanish as smoke before the wind, as wax before the fire, because of the manifested glory of Immanuel. "Lo, the kings were assembled; they passed by together. They beheld, so they marvelled; were troubled, and hasted away. Fear took hold upon them there, and pain as on a woman in travail." Ps. xlviii. 4. In vain, therefore, shall they

gather themselves together : in vain shall they consolidate their strength. "Gird yourselves and be broken in pieces : gird yourselves and be broken in pieces," "for God is with us." Such, even now, is the anticipative voice of faith ; such the cry that shall finally be heard from the lips of the repentant and spared remnant of Israel. A confederacy mightier and more terrible than any that earth has ever yet seen, will be formed against Jerusalem. They will say of Jehovah and of Christ, "Let us break their bonds asunder :—" they will say of Israel, "Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation ; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance." Ps. lxxxiii. 4. It will be a confederacy of the kings of the whole Roman nation (*της οικουμενης ὀλης*) gathered by "spirits of devils working miracles." No gathering has been ever like it, neither will be ever again : "a great people and a strong ; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations." Joel ii. 2. The power of Jehovah of Hosts is alone competent to conflict with them ; and He will conflict with them. "In Judah is God known ; his name is great in Israel. In Salem also is his Tabernacle, and his dwelling-place in Zion. There brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle. . . . . The stout-hearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep ; and none of the men of might have found their hands. At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep. Thou, even thou, art to be feared ; and who may stand in thy sight

when once thou art angry? Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth trembled and was still, when God arose to judgment, to save all the meek upon earth." Ps. lxxvi. Then, but not before, shall the words be fulfilled, "Gird yourselves and be broken in pieces; gird yourselves and be broken in pieces." It will be "the battle of the great day of God the Almighty," that day of burning of which the closing verses of the passage before us speaks.

But this attestation to the glorious power of God, pledged though it was in the name Immanuel, was in the far distant future. In sending forth His Prophets, His power chose for itself a far different mode of operation. It operated in the midst of rebellious and obdurate evil, submitting to take the place of rejection and reproach, content with gathering to itself a remnant who also were to be despised and to suffer. Such was the place to which Isaiah was appointed, and for which he was strengthened.

He needed strength, for he was in every thing to withstand the current of the day. The whole flow of human thought around him was rushing on in a channel that was carrying men further and further into distance from God. Religiously and secularly (even as now) society was retiring from light, and repudiating blessing. Truth was hated and proscribed: falsehood loved and honoured. Under such circumstances, if the servants of God are to be preserved in holy separation, it needs that a strong and vigorous hand should be held over them. "Jehovah spake thus to me with a strong hand,



and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people," or more literally, "Thus said Jehovah unto me with strength of hand, and instructed me away [i. e. so as to draw me away] from walking in the way of this people, saying," &c. In a day of danger, when by-ways, and pit-falls, and seducing voices abound, we need to be ruled by a firm uncompromising hand. Restraint, or it may be correction sharp and vigorous, is needed when through negligence, or weakness, or weariness, present dangers are inadequately estimated, or insufficiently watched against. If our inward eye should become dim, if we should cease to view the scene around us in the light of revealed Truth, if our steps should become halting, or should decline toward the path of apostasy, it is well that we should be made to feel that a strong hand is over us, able to correct with sharpness, even whilst it preserves in mercy. Separation unto God must, until the great hour of rectification come, involve antagonism to the world; and antagonism to the world must place us in habitual practical opposedness to the world's most cherished systems. We shall blame where others praise, and praise where others blame: we shall weep where others laugh, and warn where others encourage. Many a practice, and many a maxim conventionally sanctioned, many a time-honoured institution, many a scheme of future progress, or present advantage, we shall find ourselves obliged to repudiate and condemn. Satisfied neither with the past nor with the present, nor with the future of the Day of man, we shall be esteemed dark misanthropes—haters

of our kind, and therefore shall be ourselves hated. "I hate him," said Ahab of the prophet, "for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil." How can we prophesy good of present human progress when we know that its end is to be avowed confederation under Antichrist against the Lamb? (Rev. xvii. 13, 14.) Can we have fellowship with plans that lead to such an end as this? There are few words in Scripture more awful than these, "THE WRATH OF THE LAMB." Shall we dare it?

Separation, therefore, in an age like the present, must be the place of God's people—wise, sober-minded, humble, but resolute separation. If we take the Scripture as our guide, and prayerfully watch against the workings of our imagination, and the feverish impulses of excitement, our separation will be wise: if we call to remembrance our own short-comings, it will be humble. But separation under any circumstances must be painful. If there be vigour in our testimony we shall be persecuted: if there be feebleness we shall be contemned: and there are few things from which we shrink more than from silent contempt. It is a hard thing to submit to be ignored because we are despised. If therefore we are to be maintained in such a place, we need that a strong hand of resoluteness, as well as of mercy, should be over us to keep us in this place of honour; for is it not honour to stand (I say not with the same strength or power) in a position analogous to that in which Isaiah stood, expecting the things that he expected, eschewing the things that he eschewed? "Take, my brethren, the

prophets who have spoken unto you in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering affliction and patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure.”

If the Prophets only had been appointed to this place of “suffering affliction” it would have been marked with sufficient honour. But it has been held by a greater than they. Immanuel succeeded into the place which the Prophets as His forerunners held. Himself became **THE** Prophet. John i. 21, and Deut. xviii. 15 : **THE** faithful witness. But He came not to testify merely. He came to be a Sanctuary. “Sanctify Jehovah of Hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a Sanctuary.” This Jesus was, and for ever is. He was “for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem,” but to us who believe He is an everlasting Sanctuary. By His substitutional obedience and death He has constituted Himself this. In Him we find our meeting place with God in peace. Under the shelter of His meritorious righteousness we worship—precious according to its preciousness. The value of all that He is in power, and holiness, and glory, is spread over us protectively. We may discern gathering floods, but we say, no water shall overflow that hiding-place. He is our Rock.

In bringing unto us free salvation, the purchase exclusively of His own merits, He has also called us unto the honour of following (though it be but feebly) in the same path that He as the great Witness of Truth

trod perfectly. He has conferred on us the honourable and blessed name of “*disciples*.” We may indeed think lightly of that name and despise our high calling, and love to be in the Sanhedrim rather than without the gate bearing His reproach; yet the fact of the calling remains. He has called us to be His disciples. “Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples: and I [it is the Messiah that speaks] will wait for Jehovah that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will wait on him. Behold, I and the children which Jehovah hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from Jehovah of hosts, the Dwelling-One in Zion. And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto the Ohvoth,\* and to the wizards that peep,† and that mutter; should not a people seek unto its God? For the living [should it seek] to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, he is one for whom there is no dawn;”‡ that is, when the light of the day-star shall suddenly break in upon the dark-

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\* See remarks on pages 74, 75.

† “Peep” from the Latin *pipio* to cry with a shrill cry as chickens when they first break the shell (see Johnson)—hence applied to wizards and necromancers who spoke with a shrill attenuated voice—*voce stridulâ et exiguâ*.

‡ The *construction* of this clause is somewhat peculiar. It commences with the indefinite plural—“if they speak”—a frequent Hebraism often transferred into the New Testament is in Luke xvi. 9.—“they may receive you,” that is, that ye may be received. Compare use of the French “on.” If there be speaking *not* according to this word, he who adopts such speaking is one to whom there is no dawn. The individualisation in the end of the passage adds vividness to the description.

ness, and the morning long looked for shall come, there shall be to such an one no morning-light. He is of the darkness, and into darkness he will depart. For such is "reserved the blackness of darkness for ever."

Contrast with this the place of the "disciples." Not only have they light in the midst of the darkness, but what is more, to them the guardianship of Truth is committed. "Bind up the testimony: seal the law among my disciples." The law and the testimony are committed to their charge. They only have the Truth; they only can walk in it; they only can display its light to others. "That good thing which hath been committed to thee, [the deposit of Truth] keep through the Holy Ghost that dwelleth in us." "Hold fast the form of sound words." Others have no meeting-place with God in peace. But *they* have. Immanuel is their Sanctuary. The sacrificial fragrance of his accepted name covers them as with sweet incense for evermore; under it they worship, under it they serve. As God's children they have been to Him committed (see Heb. ii. 10.) and He, as the Captain of their salvation, has undertaken to bring them unto glory. Associated with Him during the time in which God hides His face from the House of Jacob, they are content to suffer, and to wait for the hour when He who has for a season forsaken Zion will return to Zion, and cause Immanuel's Land to be the Land of glory. They know that the night of darkness must continue till then; but they long for the morning, often saying, "Oh, that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion." Yet they

wait patiently, remembering Him who “waited *for* Jehovah,” (i.e. waited for Jehovah to act in His own appointed time,) and who also waited *on* Jehovah, as on One in whom He rested confidently and whom He observantly served. Whilst the Church walked in practical separateness before God, mindful of its high calling, it stood as a sign to the House of Jacob from the Lord. It indicated that light, and strength, and blessing, had indeed been withdrawn from Israel, but that it had not been taken from the earth—that there was still a circle within which it might be found. But against this sign also, Israel’s unbelief prevailed. It was a sign wondered at and despised. It wrought no repentance; it worked no godly jealousy. Although, therefore, it may be, and is true, that the present condition of Christendom is such as justly to stumble Israel, and to drive them into further distance from God (who can tell the awful responsibility that rests on Christendom as to this?) yet we have to remember, that even when it was otherwise—when the pure testimonies of Truth were found on the lips of the Apostles and early servants of Christ, the light was even then wondered at and despised. And so it will be again. Before the fulness of Antichristian darkness shall finally set in, a mighty testimony to Christ and to His Truth, will arise out of the bosom of Israel itself. It will be comprehensive, separative, and of pearl-like purity. But *it* also will be marvelled at, hated, and trampled down.

Christendom’s responsibility in having become a stumbling-block to, and a perverter of, Israel, it is not

easy to appreciate. Not only has it by its idolatry, and worldliness, and evil, raised up a barrier against the approach of Israel to Jesus,—it is now doing more than this. Multitudes in Christendom are seeking to wean Israel from a belief in Moses and the Prophets, and from all definiteness of Truth, and to lead them on into the dark ocean of scepticism which they have themselves entered. They wish that Israel should enter with them the dark circle in which they propose that men should fraternize apart from Truth, and apart from God. The dread result of this fraternization as it will finally be displayed in the land of Israel and in Jerusalem, may be seen in the concluding part of the chapter before us. What description can be more awful? It is the description of an apostate—one of those for whom there will be no morning—no dawn. When the power of Antichristian darkness and all the woe consequent thereon shall rest in all intensity on the land of Israel, “he [the apostate] shall pass through it, [the land] hardly bestead and hungry.” He shall know famine in body and in soul. “And it shall be that when he is a hungered, he shall fret himself, and shall curse by his God and by his king” [i.e. in the recklessness and hopelessness of despair he shall in the name of his king and God—Antichrist, curse every thing] and look upward, [that is, to the heavens,] but there shall be no hope there. “And to the earth he shall look, and behold woe and gloom, dimness of anguish—but the thick darkness is dispelled:” not, however, to him for whom

there is to be no morning light—no dawn. The morning without clouds shall come and chase away all darkness; but it shall not be for him. Light, the light of glory, will be more terrible to him even than darkness. To darkness he belongs, therefore in it, and with it, he shall pass away. Such is the doom of apostasy—such the end towards which a large section of Christendom around us is at this present moment hastening.

Suddenly and abruptly come the words, "*but the thick darkness is dispelled:*" yet they are not more sudden or unexpected than the event they indicate. Suddenly, and in a moment, will the brightness of heaven's own light and glory break in on the satanic scene below, and the consolidated evil of earth become like chaff scattered before the whirlwind. "Before your pots can feel the thorns, he shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in his wrath." The thick darkness shall be dispelled, for there shall not be [i.e. there shall not continue to be] darkness to her [the daughter of Zion, or the land of Israel] to whom there is now distress. As the former time debased the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, so the latter glorifies the way of the sea beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles. "The people [i.e. of Galilee]—they who walked in darkness, beheld a great light, the dwellers in the land of the shadow of death, upon them light shone. Thou didst [of old] enlarge the nation, but didst not increase the joy: they [now] rejoice before thee according to the joy in harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. For the yoke of his burden, and the rod of his



shoulder, and the staff of his task-master thou hast broken as in the day of Midian." It shall be the day of Israel's salvation: the Deliverer shall have come out of Zion and turned away ungodliness from Jacob." Yet great and marvellous as will be the light that shall then burst upon the eyes of delivered Israel, it will be but the return of a light that had before visited them, though they knew it not. It is the same light (then to be manifested in its proper glory) that had before shone on them in the person of Immanuel, when as Jesus of Nazareth He ministered in Galilee, proving that He was the One who had said, "I am Jehovah that healeth thee." Exodus xv. 26. "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles," have already during the time of their chastisement and debasement, been visited by that same light that will by and by come to raise them from that debasement, and to bring unto them glory. "As the former time debased the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, so the latter glorifieth the way of the sea beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles." And as it was the same light, so they in the midst of whom it shone were "walkers in darkness," "dwellers in the land of the shadow of death," less manifestly indeed, but as truly as Israel will be in the day of their final woe. "The people (i.e. of Galilee), the walkers in darkness saw a great light: the dwellers in the land of the shadow of death, light shone upon them." It shone upon them, but it was rejected.

But it shone not only on them ; it shone also towards God. He in whom that light was, came to obey and glorify God ; and what He came to do He did, for the sake of those whom He was appointed to redeem. He went down into the depth of death—judicial death, bore all that was appointed to be borne, presented the unsullied brightness of His own perfectness unto God, and so provided that atonement, apart from which the day of joy and deliverance described in the passage before us, could never come. Immanuel must serve, and suffer, and die in order to save. If He had not been what He was in Galilee, He never would be what He will be in the coming hour of His manifested glory. Well, therefore, may the Holy Ghost, whilst describing that hour of glory, interpose a verse that leads back our thoughts to the past, and teaches us to find in the finished humiliation of the Holy One, the foundation on which the superstructure of blessedness in earth and in heaven rests.

Utterly destitute and (according to human thought) hopeless will be the condition of Israel when the morning of their salvation breaks. No confederacy that earth has ever yet seen is like the confederacy that will have been formed against Israel then. It will be the hour of the maturity of the world's strength, and all that strength will not only be gathered together against Israel, but gathered by an agency that is not of man. "Spirits of devils working miracles" shall gather it. (see Rev. xvi.) The nations shall rush like the rushing of mighty waters. The mighty tide shall roll into the

valley of Jehoshaphat and pour in upon Jerusalem, when suddenly the Jehovah of Israel shall rend the heavens, and come down, and they shall confront IM-MANUEL.

“Jehovah also thundered in the heavens,  
 And the Highest gave his voice,  
 Hailstones and coals of fire :  
 Yea, he sent out his arrows,  
 And scattered them :  
 And he shot out lightnings,  
 And discomfited them :  
 Then the channels of waters were seen,  
 And the foundations of the world were discovered.  
 At thy rebuke O Jehovah,  
 At the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.”

What can withstand that day of burning? “The armour of the armed man in the tumult [of the battle field] and the garment rolled in blood shall [alike] be for burning—food of fire.” In other words, that which still standeth strong in its armed strength, and that which has already fallen shall be alike “for burning—food of fire.” All that is of man shall be bowed down, and Jehovah alone be exalted.

Then at last, Israel shall say, “a child is born to us, a son is given unto us: and the government [even the government of all things Ps. viii.] is on his shoulder.” Him whom before they knew not, they shall recognise then, and own Him as the hope and joy of Israel and of all nations. “And his name shall be called Won-

derful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." To the increase of the government and of the peace, there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to confirm it, in judgment and in righteousness from henceforth, and for ever. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts shall perform this.

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## NOTES ON ISAIAH VIII. & IX. 1—7.

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### VERSES 1 AND 2.

*And Jehovah said unto me, Take thee a great tablet, and write upon it with the pen of a man, 'For Mahershalah-hashbas.' And I will take\* to me to bear witness faithful witnesses, to wit Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah.*

*A great tablet.] "A tablet" on which any thing is inscribed, and not "a roll," is the proper meaning גליון. See Gesenius. Write on it with the pen [or stylus] of a man, i.e. in a plain ordinary hand that all*

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\* If we retain the present pointing, we must understand the words, "I will take, &c.," as a continuation of the words of Jehovah. Dr. Alexander observes: "The Vulgate takes the verb as a preterite (et adhibui mihi testes) and Gesenius, Maurer, Knobel read accordingly וְאֶעֱיֶדֶךָ with *Vav conversive*. The Septuagint, Targum, and Peshito make it imperative (μαρτυρας μοι ποιησον), and Hitzig accordingly reads וְאֶעֱיֶדֶךָ. Gesenius formerly preferred an indirect or subjunctive construction, which is still retained by Henderson, and that I should take as witnesses. The true construction is no doubt the obvious one, and I will cite as witnesses (Hendewerk, Ewald, Umbreit)—God being still the speaker." See Alexander in locum.

might read and understand. Plainness and simplicity is the characteristic of true teaching.

*To Mahershalahashbaz.]* Haste—spoil—quick—prey. Or it may be read as a sentence: Hasten spoil, prey hastens. See Cocceius and Alexander.

#### VERSES 3 AND 4.

*And I approached unto the Prophetess; and she conceived, and brought forth a son. And Jehovah said unto me, Call his name Mahershalahashbaz. For before the child shall know to cry, my father and my mother, there shall be taken away [literally one shall take away] the wealth of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria before the king of Assyria.*

*Before the child shall know, &c.]* The spoiling of Damascus and Samaria which was to take place speedily, was designed as a *present* pledge that the more distant promise respecting Immanuel should in due season be fulfilled. God never asks His people to believe any thing without sufficient attestation. The genuineness and authenticity of His written Word have been adequately attested by Him. But men now despise His attestations; and despise Him.

#### VERSES 5, 6, 7, 8.

*And Jehovah spake to me yet again, saying, Because this people hath despised the waters of Shiloah that flow softly, and rejoice with respect to Resin and Remaliah's son*

[i.e. rejoice over their fall]; *therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river that are strong and that are many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall rise above all his channels, and go over all his banks: and he shall pass over into Judah; shall overflow and pass through, to the neck shall he reach, and the spreadings of his wings shall be the filling of the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel.*

*The waters of the river, &c.]* How little they who are now despising the gentle flow of the stream of Truth, and are turning from God and from the Bible to truthless Secularism, know that *Assyria* will be the home of that Secularism—the place where its throne will be reared, and its godless strength centralized. Thus the waters of Euphrates will again be strong and many. It will again be “the *great river Euphrates,*” (see Rev. xvi. 12.) the symbol of the strength of godless civilization by whose dark wing the land of Israel shall again be overspread, till it shall encounter there the presence of Immanuel in His glory. See Rev. xvi. 14. But what solemn interest does the knowledge of this give to a chapter like the present. It ceases to be a tale of by-gone days. Vivid and awful is the light that it throws on the now near approaching future.

#### VERSES 9 AND 10.

*Associate yourselves, O ye peoples, and be broken in pieces; and give ear ye far places of earth: gird yourselves and be broken in pieces: gird yourselves and be broken*

*in pieces. Take counsel together and it shall come to nought, speak the word and it shall not stand, for Immanuel [God is with us.]*

*Associate yourselves, &c.\*]* There have, no doubt, been many gatherings against Israel that have foreshadowed (partially and imperfectly) the last great confederation of which this passage speaks. Although such foreshadowing events admit of parts of the description being *applied* to them, the passage as a whole can only be *interpreted* of that to which it properly belongs. The very fact that the Land of Immanuel still groans under the power of the Gentile stranger is a proof that the passage is not fulfilled.

#### VERSES 11, 12, 13.

*For thus said Jehovah to me, with a strong hand [literally with strength of hand] and instructed me away from walking in the way of this people, saying, Ye shall not say a confederacy to all to whom this people shall say a confederacy, and its fear ye shall not fear, nor be afraid. Jehovah of hosts, him shall ye sanctify, and he shall be your fear, and he your dread.*

*Say ye not, a confederacy, &c.]* When any supposed or real citadel of Truth is shaken, and men feel that their own interests or comforts are shaken with it, they

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\* Or "*congregate yourselves*" (Vulgate and Chaldaic) רָעוּ from רָעָה to associate as flocks do in feeding. Imp. Pual. See *Fausset in locum*.



tremble : but if they deem their own interests secure, they feel about Truth very much as the mother in Solomon's judgment did about the child that was not her own. We care little what becomes of that which we *love* not.

The force of the passage before us has been little apprehended, even by God's true people. Recent circumstances, indeed, have made many suspect that a conflict, which they anticipated not, threatens them : but still few apprehend what is written in the Scripture respecting the great confederacy that is to be formed against God and against Truth ; or if they apprehend it, they think it distant, and refuse to recognise that it brings into any present moral danger.

Yet whether the hour of the last great confederacy be distant or nigh, it is very evident that before it comes, there will be a concentrated effort of the powers of darkness to make the people of Christ, professing and true, renounce the confession of His Truth. And there will be a vast withdrawal. (*ὑποστολη.*) Are there no tokens of such "withdrawal" around us now ? Do we not see an increased disposition to relinquish truths hitherto accounted precious ? The words, "the righteous by faith shall live," at the time of the Reformation, made thousands of hearts thrill : but how are they regarded now ? They are despised : or else nullified by false expositions. Few are willing to allow that the one atonement does by itself alone *save*—that it alone gives the *title* to all blessing—all glory. Forms of sound words are despised. The result is, a being

tossed to and fro—an indecision and unsettlement of mind that argues that the soul has not been proof against the seducing power of falsehood that prevails and is to increase, till the fulness of the *ενεργεια πλανης*, “the energy of deceptiveness or bewilderment” come. At an hour like this, therefore, should there not be a godly fear, and a desire to be under the protection and control of that “strong hand” that is able to keep from the path of withdrawal, and to cause us to abide in Christ? The true people of Christ have a commandment to abide—“and now little children abide in Him,” 1 John ii. 28: but what is more, they have also a promise that they shall abide. See 1 John ii. 27. That which the Seducer assails as falsehood we are able to say, “we know as Truth;” and that by means of the unction from above. Of this knowledge we cannot be dispossessed. No power of man or of Satan can take it from us. “We know him that is true:” and in Him we shall abide. As to this, the promise to every believer is fixed and certain. Nevertheless, carelessness and a lack of stedfastness may entail chastisement and many sorrows even on them whom God’s faithful grace may preserve from final apostasy.

## VERSES 14 AND 15.

*And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence unto the two houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare unto the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.*

*For a sanctuary]* מִקְדָּשׁ. See Exodus xxv. 8. "Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them." The Sanctuary was the meeting-place of God and of His people in the power of the blessings of REDEMPTION. There we are known in the merits of Another. There we find love from which nothing can separate—glory that eye hath not seen. "Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary." How contrasted the condition of those who know that Sanctuary, and those on whom the hour of Antichrist closes in with its darkness and bewilderment!

Israel were commanded to form the typical Sanctuary and to furnish it. They had to provide the gold and the silver, the blue and the purple, the incense and the spices, and the onyx stones. But in Christ we find all these things provided by the gift of God—all that is known in heaven and in earth as precious, or beautiful, or excellent, or fragrant, is all found in Him—there provided for us, that we might say, "all is ours"—all is for our sakes, and bless God for ever.

*To both the houses of Israel.]* We often hear it said, that the ten tribes are lost; and many imagine that they were not concerned in the rejection and crucifixion of the Lord, but only Judah. This verse, however, plainly negatives such thoughts. Immanuel was when manifested in the flesh, a stumbling stone "to the two houses of Israel." No words can be plainer. Nor are the ten tribes ever regarded in the Scripture as lost. St. Paul says: "unto which promise our *twelve* tribes

instantly serving God day and night hope to come." James also writes: "to the *twelve* tribes which are scattered abroad:" words that would not have been used unless many had been converted to Christ out of *all* the tribes. Peter also was an Apostle to the circumcision, and wrote to "the strangers scattered throughout Pontus," &c., most of whom were doubtless converts from the ten tribes. In the Revelation too, in a passage yet unfulfilled, all the tribes, with the exception of Dan, are mentioned. See Rev. vii.

#### VERSES 17 AND 18.

*Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. And I will wait for Jehovah that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will wait on him. Behold I and the children which Jehovah hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from Jehovah of hosts, the dwelling-one in Mount Zion.*

*Among my disciples.]* In contrast with blinded Israel when they found Jesus of Nazareth a stumbling-stone; and in yet more terrible contrast with them when they shall gather themselves around Antichrist, and be given over to the darkness of the pit, and seek unto wizards that peep and that mutter—in contrast with Israel in both these conditions, stand the disciples.

What can be more blessed than the place assigned to *them*. Accepted according to the acceptance of the Sanctuary, loved by the Father as "children," and as such committed to the faithful care of Immanuel, they

stand not only instructed by Him, but associated *with* Him during the day of conflict and evil, and have committed to them the despised and rejected testimonies of Truth. What place can be more honourable, more blessed than this? In Jerusalem, during the Pentecostal period, the testimonies of Truth were maintained not unworthily. But when Israel after long trial hardened themselves in unbelief, the light was taken from them, and went down to sojourn among the Gentiles. See Acts xxviii. 28. There it still tarrices. Would that we could say that Truth had prospered there: but it has not prospered. The family of faith do indeed exist: they have not perished: but they have lost their manhood, their vigour, their strength. And what wonder? Have they not despised and renounced their Nazarite separateness unto God?

One can scarcely help being reminded of the history of Elimelech and Naomi. There was a famine in the land of Israel—a dearth of bread. And Elimelech and Naomi left and went down into the land of Moab, and there they “continued.” But they prospered not. The manhood of the family perished. Elimelech, Mahlon, Chilion, were all swept away; and weakness and widowhood remained. “Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.” Christianity during its sojourn among the Gentiles has indeed become widowed and enfeebled.

But before the end, the voice of Truth shall again be heard in the midst of Israel and Jerusalem. It shall be a potent voice; and though the majority shall still re-

ject, yet many shall hear. Bread shall again be found in the Land of Israel. The voice of the Prophets and of the Apostles shall be again heard to speak in concord. There shall be a pure, pearl-like testimony. The falsehoods of Gentilized Christianity, which have so long prevailed, shall give place to the testimonies of men who shall view things from the stand-point in which the Prophets and Apostles viewed them (that is, through the vista of Israelitish promise, and Israelitish hope) and who shall find in the New Testament the complement, not the reversal of the promises of the Old. They shall bring out of their treasures, "things new AND old," and shall display them in the harmony in which Scripture unites them. The new things made known to Paul, or Peter, or John, did not nullify or destroy former promises made to Abraham, or David, or Daniel. Addition and augmentation—not nullification, is the principle of God.

So far as there has been any advance in light during the last forty years, it has resulted from a renewed apprehension, graciously vouchsafed, of the place that Israel occupies in the Divine arrangements. We have gone back, as it were, into the Israelitish circle whence all our blessings have flowed. To them "pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." Rom. ix. 4. Standing within the Israelitish circle, as by the side of Paul and of John, we

are there enabled to view aright the past and the future, to discern the harmony of prophetic and apostolic truth, to estimate the darkness that has spread over Gentilized Christianity, and we have fed, so to speak, on the corn of Israel's Land while that Land yet remains dark and desolate.

The effect of this return from the mists and darkneses of Gentilized Christianity to the Apostolic view-point, can only be appreciated by those who have experienced the change. It has brought light where there was darkness: riches where there was poverty; and substituted for the dreamy expectations of ignorance and folly, hopes based on the sure promises of the Word of God. It is not too much to say, that the teachers of Christendom, age after age, have quenched or nullified every truth taught in the eleventh of the Romans respecting the Abrahamic olive-tree, and the relation of the Jewish and Gentile branches thereunto. We cannot wonder, therefore, that every attempt to unveil the future of Israel, and to re-open the well-springs of Israelitish promise is regarded by many much in the same way as Haman regarded Mordecai. Haman-like principles and feelings will no doubt abound more and more as the end approaches. Yet they who like Mordecai remember the destinies of Israel, will never bow to Haman, however proud his strength—however great his glory. They may suffer for awhile; but they shall overcome and triumph at the last. The principles of Mordecai shall stand when those of Haman perish for ever.

*But while many like Haman hate, others like Orpah,*

too languid and indifferent either to hate much or love much, kiss the returning Naomi and depart—thinking it better wisdom to retain the present realities of Moab, than to trust themselves to the contingencies of an uncertain future. Nevertheless, there are a few who shall continue to love Naomi, and shall refuse to abandon her, and so shall find their way to the harvest-fields of Him whose name is STRENGTH.

When the time comes for “the understanding ones” (הַמִּשְׁכִּילִים see Dan. xi. 35.) again to appear in the midst of Israel, these things will be more developed and better understood.

*And I will wait for Jehovah.*] For a similar use of חָכָה (Pihel) followed by ל, see Hab. ii. 3. “Though it tarry, *wait for it.*” It is a word that implies the patient expectation of one who waits for the action of another. See also Zeph. iii. 8. “Therefore, *wait ye upon me, saith Jehovah, until the day that I rise up for the prey.*”

*And I will wait on him.*] The rendering in our English version “look to,” sufficiently gives the sense of קָוָה. It is a word that implies observancy of another whom we are seeking to serve and to please. See Ps. xxvii. 14. “*Wait on the Lord: be of good courage: . . . . wait, I say, on the Lord.*” In this passage to *wait for*, חָכָה, has a future; קָוָה a present reference. He who describes Himself as *waiting for Jehovah*, did also, whilst *waiting for Him*, *wait on Him*.

The rendering given of this clause by the Sept. is



*πεποιθως εσομαι επ' αυτω*—a loose, and indeed incorrect rendering. Yet many have supposed that the quotation of the Apostle in Heb. ii. 13 is hence derived. But this is evidently a mistake. The quotation of the Apostle is doubtless taken from 2 Sam. xxii. 3, where the Hebrew words are בן עמרה, *there* rightly translated by the Sept. *πεποιθως εσομαι επ' αυτω*.

VERSES 19 AND 20.

*And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto the Ohooth,\* (ad Pythonicos) and to the wizards that peep and that mutter, should not a people seek unto its God? For the living [should it seek] to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according [or if there be a speaking not according†] to this word, he (who so speaks) is one to whom there is no dawn.*

*For the living.]* That is, on behalf of the living.— See the account of Saul going to the witch of Endor in order that he might (as he thought) call up and consult the dead. Necromancy is even now resorted to by many, and as the latter day draws nigh will be abundantly practised. Not that the dead are really raised; but evil spirits personate them. The witch of Endor did not expect to raise Samuel, but intended that her familiar spirit, or Ohv, should personate Samuel, and answer Saul's questions. When God really sent Samuel she was terrified.

\* See page 74.

† See note †, page 255.

*To the law and to the testimony, &c.*] Our appeal is always to be to the written revelation of God now given in its completeness. To them who refuse to be tested by this test, there is no morning. They are of the darkness, and into darkness will depart. The word used here never means light simply (אור): it means always “morning,” “the light of the dawn.”

When Antichristianism shall have established itself fully, and when deceiving signs and wonders shall abound, how will they who fear God appreciate the mercy of having Holy Scripture left as the sure, un-failing test, whereby they may try all things. There will be many a deceiver who will speak, even as now, great swelling words of vanity; but their words will not bear the test of the Word of God, and so the poor of the flock will be able to detect the falsehood (however attested by supernatural power) and will boldly say;—These men are not of God: for them there is no morning-light.

Throughout the long course of retrocession from God trodden by Christendom, the distinctive mark of God’s faithful people has been adherence to the Scripture. Even the true Church may become corrupt. It may wander far from Truth, and be a deceiving guide. But the Scripture remains the one unchanged witness for God: the purity of whose light knows no abatement. Some speak as if they thought that the Holy Ghost should be magnified above the Scripture. But it is not so. The authority of the Holy Ghost and of the Scripture are equal. The words of the Scripture are the words of the

Holy Ghost ; consequently, as is the authority of the one, such is the authority of the other. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,"\* and is able not only to make wise unto salvation, but also to make the man of God "thoroughly furnished" unto every good work. How great this mercy ! What a holy independency it gives to the God-fearing soul ! How it frees from the cruel bondage of religious tyranny. The Truth maketh free, and to all God's believing people, ability is given by the creation of the new man in them, and by the indwelling of the Paraclete, to come to the light of the Word of God.

The incessant effort of Satan has ever been to quench this light. The chief instrument that he has hitherto employed for this purpose is *Ecclesiasticism*, which bids us look, not to the voice of the Spirit in Holy Scripture, but to the voice of the Spirit *in the Church*. Every system in which this principle lurks, however modified its form, has entered the path of Apostasy.†

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\* Such is the right translation of this passage, though it has been cavilled at. See remarks on this subject in "Occasional Papers," No. 1, p. 27.

† The statement of this great principle of Ecclesiasticism is thus made by Dr. Manning in his recent work on "The Temporal Mission of the Holy Ghost :"—

"To submit to the voice of the Holy Spirit *in the Church* is the absolute condition to attain perfect knowledge of revelation." p. 9.

The present condition of sacerdotal Christendom attests the ruin which this principle has wrought. We may with safety say that neither Paganism, nor Judaism, nor Mahomedanism, afford *more terrible examples of subjection to the power of hell than are*

The other great engine of Satan is *Rationalism*. Ecclesiasticism and Rationalism are at the present moment dividing society around us. Both lead into a place of distinct rebellion against God, because they both take from Holy Scripture that place of *supreme and exclusive* authority which God has assigned to it. Both these systems, therefore, withdraw men from the only true light. They are working now with vastly increased

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found in the history of the Sacerdotalism of Christendom, especially its Roman branch. It will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for them.

Rationalism is defined by Dr. Manning thus: "The perfect or fully developed Rationalism is founded on the assumption that the reason is the sole fountain of all knowledge relating to God, and to the soul, and to the relations of God and of the soul. This does not mean the reason of each individual, but of the human race, which elicits from its intellectual consciousness a theology of reason, and transmits it as a tradition in the society of mankind." p. 7.

High pretensions these! In the one case, we have the collective voice of the Church speaking in the power of the Holy Ghost: in the other, the collective voice of humanity. In the one case we have the theology of Ecclesiasticism transmitted as a tradition in the society of the baptized: in the other, a theology of reason transmitted as a tradition in the society of mankind. Such are the two great present lies of Satan. We have not, however, to expect that the theories of either of these two systems will be carried out according to the hopes of their respective adherents. The cold, selfish, fox-like eclecticism of Secularism (the child of the popular will) will no doubt use them both, selecting such of their principles as it may deem most conducive to the promotion of its own godless ends. So will be inaugurated that final system which Antichrist will with transcendent, because superhuman, ability work. The DEVIL shall give him "his power, and his throne, and great authority." Rev. xiii. 2.

activity, and are preparing society for that last great lie of Satan of which Antichrist is to be the embodiment.

Oh! that God might be pleased to awaken His true people to an apprehension of the character of the present conflict, and of their own need. In order to use the Word of God effectually, they must understand it. Do they understand it? The sword, and the only sword, which the Spirit puts into our hand, is the Scripture. Therefore it is called "the sword of the Spirit." We cannot fight without it. What if we despise it? What if we spend our energies in blunting it? What if we turn to other weapons?

It would be well if Christian parents would remember the circumstances in which their children, if not themselves, are about to be placed. The slumber of ages is being broken in upon. The principles of God as revealed in Scripture, and the principles by which Satan works, are being brought out into sharper and sharper antagonism. The people of God will find it needful to abandon half-principles and Jehoshaphat-like alliances with evil men. Walls built with untempered mortar will not stand. The people of Christ need the pure full light of Holy Scripture; and to this God is now seeking to separate them, that they might meet the fierce onset of the foe with their loins girded—girded about "with Truth." What if, at an hour like this, Christian parents should see their children seeking to the Word of God, and to the paths which it opens: will they withstand them? Will they covet

for their children smoother and more honourable ways? Will they say that they shall not “lose their lives in this world;” that they shall not go without the gate to bear the reproach of Truth, but that they shall follow where Society leads? Let them then read the concluding verses of this chapter. *There* we find the doom of those who adopt and carry out to their legitimate end the favoured principles of this present hour. How different the path of those “of whom the world is not worthy,” whose record in heaven shall be, “they overcame because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death.”

True indeed it is (and we bless God for it for ever) that *the title* of the redeemed to glory is complete. It is found wholly in the merits of Immanuel, the righteousness of our God and Saviour. Grace has founded it thereon, and it standeth fast for ever. He has “made us meet\* to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” But shall we not desire also to be practically ready—to be *ευθεροι* as well as *ικανοι*—for the kingdom of God? Shall we not seek to be found in a right practical relation to the evil that struggles within us, and the evil that dominates around us?—not compromising, not yielding, but withstanding. Surely we would desire to be found in our right appointed place in the army of the Lord; not flying before, nor dallying with, the foe. Some make realiza-

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\* See Colossians i. 12. *Ευχαριστουντες τω πατρι τω ικανωσαντι ημας.*

tion of their acceptance in Christ the great point of attainment in spiritual life : others, the realization of our being risen with Christ and seated in Him in heavenly places : but the apprehension of both these things (blessed as it is, and needful) is but the means to an end. The present end of Christian attainment is fellowship with Christ *here*. The highest of all present experiences is given in such a verse as the following : “ if a man love me, he will keep my words ; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode WITH him.” (John xiv. 23.) How great, therefore, must be the error of those who seek wholly to abstract believers from the circumstances of earth, and speak contemptuously of truths and precepts intended for the guidance of the redeemed *here*. Earth, not heaven, is the present place of our conflict and service. We are indeed heavenly in Him who is risen to be our head and representative and fore-runner in the heavens : but we are heavenly persons left on earth with light sent down from heaven to guide us that we might therein view both evil and good, and act according to that knowledge, till the day of evil ends. Shall we despise heavenly light because it is shed on earthly things ? Then we must despise the place which the disciples occupy in the passage before us. We must despise all the instruction of this most blessed chapter.

#### VERSES 21 and 22.

*And he shall pass through it [the Land] hardly be-  
stead and hungry : and it shall be that when he is hun-*

*gered he shall fret himself and curse by his king and by his God and shall look upward. And to the earth he shall look, and behold woe, and gloom, dimness of anguish. But the thick darkness is dispelled.*

*He shall curse by his king, &c.]* So Cocceius, who rightly observes that the verb  $\text{קלל}$  does not elsewhere take the preposition  $\text{ב}$  as a connective. Contrast the closing words of Ps. cxxix. 8. “We will bless you in the name of Jehovah.” They who serve Antichrist will curse, and be accursed—they who serve Jehovah shall bless and be blessed.

*And to the earth he shall look.]* The previous clause places the apostate in the Land of Israel. Through it he passes hardly bestead and hungry, for on the Land of Israel will fall that tribulation the like to which has never been. But that unequalled season of tribulation on Israel will end by a visitation which will include the whole earth. As soon as “the times of the Gentiles” are fulfilled (not before) “there shall be signs in the sun, and moon, and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and of the surge (*εν απορια ηχους θαλασσης και σαλου*) men’s hearts failing them for fear and for looking for those things that are coming on the world; for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.” Thus whether men look to the heavens above, or to the earth beneath, all will be terror. This is exactly the scene pourtrayed in the passage before us.



*But the thick darkness is dispelled.*] Abrupt transitions like this are much more frequent in the Prophets and Psalms than is commonly supposed. Compare Ps. xxii. 21.

“Save me from the lion’s mouth  
And from the horns of the buffaloes—  
Thou hast answered me.”

Dr. Alexander, after having noticed other proposed renderings of the passage before us, adds: “Another construction is the one proposed by J. D. Michaelis, who connects מַנְרָה with מַעוֹה, and puts the latter in construction not only with צִוְקָה but also with אַפְלָה, ‘the dimness of anguish and of gloom is dissipated.’ This construction is recommended by its freedom from grammatical anomalies, and by its rendering the use of וְ at the beginning of the next verse altogether natural. The objections to it are, that it violates the accents; that it makes the Prophet speak of the darkness of darkness (but see Exodus x. 22); and that the transition from the threatening to the promise is, on this supposition, too abrupt. Either of the two constructions last proposed may be preferred without materially affecting the interpretation of the passage. Hitzig modifies that of Michaelis by taking the last word separately—*it is dispelled!*”

Whether the rendering of Hitzig or of Michaelis be adopted, or that which I have given, the general sense is the same; and the connexion with the next verse preserved. Neither the accentuation nor the pointing

of the Hebrew have Divine authority, and therefore cannot be accepted as a certain guide.

## ISAIAH IX.\*

### VERSE 1.

*For there is not darkness for her [the land of Israel, or the daughter of Zion] for whom there is distress. According as the former time debased [made contemptible and vile] the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, so the latter hath brought glory to the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.*

*For there is not darkness, &c.]* The daughter of Zion may know distress, even bitter anguish, but she is not to have darkness—that darkness which the former verse has described, as her portion. It is to be dispelled for *her*, and the light of the morning, bright and blessed, is to arise on her for ever.

### VERSE 2.

*The people—those walking in darkness saw a great light: the dwellers in the land of the shadow of death, light beamed upon them.*

*The people . . . saw a great light.]* It is not unfrequent in the prophecies to find in the midst of descriptions of the future, references to the past suddenly

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\* In the Hebrew Bible, that which in our Bible stands as the first verse of the ninth chapter forms the last verse of the eighth.

introduced. This is especially the case when the future events described are results of the event referred to in the past. So is it here. The light of future joy would never visit the land of Israel unless it had already shone in the manner in which it once did shine in Nazareth and in Galilee. Israel would never behold their Messiah-King in His glory, unless He had already been Jesus the Nazarene accomplishing through suffering that work of redemption from which all their coming blessedness flows. The past is referred to because it is the ground-work of all the coming blessedness of the future.

For other examples of this, see Zech. xiii. 7, where, after a prolonged description of Israel's yet *future* deliverance, the *past* redemption on which that deliverance rests is suddenly referred to—"Awake O sword, against my shepherd," &c. So also Is. liii. in its relation to the preceding chapter, which is a chapter that treats of Israel's yet future glory, but is based on the accomplished suffering and death of the Holy One described in the fifty-third chapter. See likewise Is. xxviii. 16. "Behold I am the layer in Zion for a foundation, a stone," &c. This has been done. The tried foundation stone has been laid. But these words are suddenly introduced in the midst of a passage which refers to future woes yet to come, when Israel shall form its covenant with hell, and give themselves over to Antichrist.

## VERSES 3 AND 4.

*Thou didst [of old] multiply the nation, but not increase the joy: they [now] rejoice before thee according to the joy in harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. For the yoke of his burden and the rod of his shoulder, and the staff of his task-master hast thou broken as in the day of Midian.*

*Thou didst multiply, &c.]* There is not the least reason why we should alter the reading of this passage and read לִ for אֵל. In Solomon's time the nation was wonderfully multiplied: but did the joy increase? Did it not wane, and at last depart? But when the joy comes to them that the true Solomon shall bring, it shall abide. "Be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for behold I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy." See Is. lxx. 18.

*As in the day of Midian.]* The light that really dwells in every saint (for Christ is in them the hope of glory, though they be but earthen vessels, 2 Cor. iv. 7) is no more discerned by men than was the light hidden in the pitchers with which Gideon met the hosts of Midian. Great was the terror of the hosts of Midian when the earthen pitchers were broken and the light within suddenly flashed upon them: but greater far will be the terror of those who shall find themselves suddenly confronted by the brightness of heavenly light and glory in the person of Christ and of His raised or changed saints. So will it be in that Day, which the day of Midian feebly foreshadowed.

## VERSE 5.

*For all the armour of him that is in the tumult [of battle] mailed, and the garment rolled in blood, shall be for burning: food of fire.*

*For all the armour, &c.]* This verse indicates not only the destruction that is to fall on those, weak or strong, who are then to be destroyed, but it marks also that wars shall be made to cease. “Come, behold the works of Jehovah, what desolations He hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.” Ps. xlvi. 8.

## VERSES 6 AND 7.

*For a child hath been born to us, a son hath been given to us: and the government is upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. To the increase of the government and to the peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to establish it and to confirm it in judgment and in righteousness from henceforth and for ever. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts shall perform this.*

*His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, &c.]* If the need of the earth is to be adequately met, if its wound is to be healed, if ever it is to be governed according to God—power, and wisdom, and strength, and glory, like unto that which this verse describes

must be found in him who governs it. Men are accustomed to talk with a light and sinful flippancy about government: but how little they know what right government involves. How little do they know what it is to govern in the fear and in the knowledge of God. It requires the wisdom and holiness of God so to govern. There can be no right government otherwise: and until right government is supplied, the misery of the earth will deepen day by day, and the gulph become wider that separates it from truth, from peace, from blessing, and from God.

Blessed will be the hour when the veil shall at last be rent from the heart of Israel, and they shall no longer refuse to own the child that hath been born to them, the son that hath been given to them. Then "the times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord" shall come. Then shall "His way be known upon earth: his saving health among all nations." Therefore His people say, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

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NOTE ON THREE QUOTATIONS  
FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT, FOUND IN  
HEBREWS II. 12, 13.

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BEFORE concluding these remarks on Is. viii., it may be desirable to notice a quotation made from it (see verse 18) in the second chapter of the Hebrews, as well as two other quotations with which that quotation is associated—one from Ps. xxii. 22; the other from 2 Sam. xxii. 3.

The object of all these quotations is to show the attestation afforded in the Old Testament Scripture to the brotherhood and oneness of Christ with His people. "He that sanctifieth\* [i.e. Christ], and they who are sanctified [i.e. His believing people], are all of one:†

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\* Compare Heb. x. 10. "*Sanctified* by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once." And Heb. xiii. 12. "Jesus that he might *sanctify* the people by his own blood," &c.

† Some understand the words εἰς ἑνός to mean, of one parentage, or one Father. Compare John xx. 17. "My Father and your Father, my God and your God." *He* being the Son essentially and eternally: we being sons by grace and regeneration.

Others take the words εἰς ἑνός adverbially. Compare οὐκ εἰς ἰσού εἰσμεν, *we are not on equal terms*; and εἰς ἀπροσδοκῆτου *unexpectedly*. So εἰς ἑνός—*one-wise*; *on terms of oneness*. In either case the passage *strongly* affirms the brotherhood and *oneness* of Christ with His redeemed people.

for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, *I will declare thy name unto my brethren : in the midst of the church* [or congregation, קהל] *will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me."*

The first quotation is from Psalm xxii.—that Psalm which the Lord Jesus appropriated to Himself in the midst of His bitter agony on the cross. Commencing with words of anguish, it ends with thanksgiving and praise. But observe the relation in which Israel stood to Him in the day of His sorrow.

“Many bulls have compassed me,  
Strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.  
They gaped upon me with their mouths  
As a ravening and roaring lion.

. . . . .  
For dogs have compassed me,  
The assembly of the wicked have enclosed me.  
They pierced my hands and my feet.

. . . . .  
But be not thou far from me, O Lord ;  
O my strength, hast thou to help me.

. . . . .  
Save me from the lion's mouth  
And from the horns of the buffaloes.  
THOU HAST HEARD ME.”\*

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\* See Hebrew : and remarks of Alexander, Hengstenberg and Perowne, in their respective commentaries.



After these words, the Psalm suddenly changes from bitterness to joy. Expressions of anguish give place to anticipations of rejoicing faith, and the description passes on to that still future hour when Israel shall no longer be "an assembly of the wicked," piercing Him, and ravening on Him, but when they shall gather around Him as His brethren, and He stand in their midst praising Jehovah.

"I will declare thy name unto my brethren,\*  
 In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.  
 Ye that fear Jehovah, praise him,  
 And ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him,  
 And fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.

. . . . .  
 My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation,  
 I will pay my vows before them that fear him.

. . . . .  
 All the ends of the world  
 Shall remember and turn unto Jehovah,  
 And all the kindreds of the nations  
 Shall worship before thee,  
 For the kingdom is Jehovah's,  
 And he is the governor among the nations.  
 All that be fat on earth shall eat and worship;  
 All that go down to the dust shall bow before him;  
 And whosoever failed to keep his soul alive." †

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\* Contrast the period of which He said, "I am become a stranger unto my brethren."

† See Hebrew, and notes of Alexander and Hengstenbergh.

No one, I suppose, who believes what the Scripture teaches respecting the millennial reign of the Messiah of Israel, will doubt that the verses I have just quoted belong to that still future period. They have not yet been accomplished. It is true, indeed, that we who now believe are His "brethren," owned by Him as one with Himself: it is true that He, though unseen, is in the midst of all who are truly gathered in His name. All the spiritual blessings of Israel in the age to come we forestall. The spiritual blessings are the same; but the circumstances altogether different. The mighty-ones [fat-ones] of the earth do not yet eat and worship, i.e. worship in spirit and in truth; nor have "*all the ends of the world* remembered and turned unto Jehovah;" nor does Israel as a people "glorify Him;" nor has Christ as yet, personally and visibly, stood in the midst of the gathered congregation, and there praised Jehovah. Converted Israel will be that Church or Congregation in the midst of which He will thus stand, and thus praise.\* They are "the brethren" to whom He will declare Jehovah's name. The first, therefore, of these quotations speaks to us of Israel in the day of their millennial joy; there to be owned by

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\* See the description of the typical scene when Solomon stood, not indeed in the midst of the congregation (the grace of the *Great King* only takes that place of association) but before, or in the front of (𐤀𐤍) the congregation (see 1 Kings viii. 22): "and the king turned his face about, and blessed all the congregation of Israel: (and all the congregation of Israel stood;) and he said, Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Israel," &c. (1 Kings

the Messiah in the day of His manifested glory, as His brethren—a thought most grateful to the heart of a Hebrew; and it was to Hebrews the Apostle was writing. The next quotation speaks also of the same brethren, but in circumstances how different!

“I will put my trust in Him,” are the words of the next quotation. They are words ascribed by the Apostle to Christ, and quoted in attestation to the same truth; that is, the brotherhood and oneness of Christ with His people.

This quotation is evidently not, as many have supposed, from Is. viii. 13,\* but from 2 Sam. xxii. 3—a chapter containing (as also the 18th Psalm) the words of “the servant of Jehovah—of David who spake to Jehovah the words of this song in the day when

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\* In the first place, the words of the Sept. are, as I have already said (see note on page 275), an incorrect rendering of the clause in Isaiah, but a correct rendering of the clause in 2 Sam. xxii. 3. Secondly, if the second and third quotations had been taken from the *same* verse in Isaiah, they would not each have been prefaced by the word *παλιν*. Thirdly, if the previous quotation gives prominence to the fact of His brotherhood and oneness with forgiven Israel being declared when He stands in their midst praising Jehovah, is it likely that the equally (we might almost say more) wonderful declaration of that unity which will be afforded in the day of their calamity, when He will make *their* cry *His own*, and when *their* peril shall be regarded as *His* peril—is it likely that such a wonderful proof of His identification with them should be passed over unnoticed, especially when the fact of their deliverance on the ground of their being regarded as one with Him, will form one of the chief subjects of thanksgiving when He shall stand in the midst of *them* praising Jehovah? Not only the sentiments, but even the *words* of this marvellous Psalm will, no doubt, be adopted then.

Jehovah delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul.”

But although David's deliverance from the hand of his many enemies, supplied *the occasion* for the writing of this Psalm, yet nothing in David's history can be said to have fulfilled it. David was a Prophet, and as such, was caused by the Holy Ghost to speak of the deliverance and exaltation IN THE EARTH of a greater than himself.

David could plead no merits of his own as the ground of his deliverance. He could not say, “The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness: according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me. For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God. For all his judgments were before me: and as for his statutes, I did not depart from them. I was also upright before him, and have kept myself from mine iniquity.\* Therefore the Lord hath recompensed me according to my righteousness; according to my cleanness in his eye sight.”

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\* Not His own iniquity, for Christ had none. He was without blemish, and without spot. All His proclivities were towards God and against sin. But here, as elsewhere (see Ps. xl. 12), He speaks of the iniquity of His people, for which He had come to make satisfaction, as His iniquity. Dr. Phillips observes: “In some MSS., according to Kennicott, it is בְּצִדְקָתוֹ, *from the wicked*, which difficulty, he observes, removes all difficulty in applying the verse to Christ.” See also *De Burgh*. It is better, however, to adhere to the present reading, and explain this verse on the same principle as that on which we explain Psalm xl. 12. “The Messiah,” says Bishop Horsley, “perpetually calls those iniquities His own of which He bore the punishment.”

David could use no such words as these. He was a sinner—justified as ungodly—having to speak of the “blessedness of the man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works.” He could plead no righteousness of his own as the ground of merit and reward. That place belongs only to Immanuel.

Nor could David say that he had so triumphed over his enemies that they were finally and effectually crushed. On the contrary, with his dying lips he owned that the sons of Belial were too strong for him, and that a hand mightier than his own was needed to grasp them and utterly to burn them with fire in the same place. See 2 Sam. xxiii. 7. Contrast with this confession of his weakness, the words in which he describes in this song the final triumph of the great King of Israel. Read 2 Sam. xxii. from verse 38 to end. Not only is the deliverance spoken of in this passage founded on the merit of Him who is delivered, but it is a complete and lasting deliverance, followed by a manifested exaltation in the earth, supreme and lasting over all nations. Has this been accomplished? Or can it be accomplished in the exaltation of any one saving the great Head of Israel?

But it may be said, Does not this Psalm describe the condition of the person delivered, as being at the time of his deliverance, one of danger and anguish? Can Christ be in such circumstances? Can He be described as compassed by the waves of death, or made afraid by the floods of ungodly men? *Personally* indeed He cannot: for He is seated on the right hand of the majesty

in the heavens glorified for evermore. All power is given unto Him in heaven and in earth. The majesty and glory of the throne of the Most High God is His majesty and His glory. But what if Christ be one with His brethren? What if He regards their sorrows as His sorrows; their persecution as His persecution? "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME?" "Inasmuch that ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto ME." If this be the relation in which He stands to His brethren, then although Christ *personal* may be, and is glorified, above the heavens; yet Christ *mystical* still remaineth below, the subject of sorrow, persecution, and distress; weak in the midst of many enemies. So we can well understand the principle on which the Apostle quotes the words of this Psalm, and ascribing them to the Lord Jesus, uses them in proof that He recognises His people as His brethren one with Himself.

At what period then will any of the mystical body of Christ be found in circumstances of danger and anguish such as this Psalm describes? Who are they that are described as compassed about by the sorrows of Hades and prevented by the snares of death? (verse 5.) I answer, such will be the condition of the elect spared remnant of Israel at the moment of their forgiveness. Hosts that are, it is said, to be gathered by "spirits of devils working miracles," (Rev. xvi. 14) will compass them. They will be as a bird in the snare; as prey in the mouth of the devourer, when suddenly, Jehovah in sovereign grace shall hear their despairing cry; shall

rend the veil from their heart; "open" (to use the language of Scripture) "His eyes on" them; place them under the efficacy of the atoning blood of Jesus, and they stand identified with Christ; His merits, their merits; their sorrows, His sorrows; their enemies, His enemies. See how He appropriates to Himself their circumstances. "When the waves of death compassed me, the floods of ungodly men made me afraid; the sorrows of hell compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me; in my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried to my God: and he did hear my voice out of his temple, and my cry did enter into his ears. Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations of heaven moved and shook, because he was wroth. There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also, and came down; and darkness was under his feet. And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: and he was seen upon the wings of the wind. And he made darkness pavilions round about him, dark waters, and thick clouds of the skies. Through the brightness before him were coals of fire kindled. The Lord thundered from heaven, and the most High uttered his voice. And he sent out arrows, and scattered them; lightning, and discomfited them. And the channels of the sea appeared, the foundations of the world were discovered, at the rebuking of the Lord, at the blast of the breath of his nostrils. He sent from above, he took me; he drew me out of many waters; he delivered me from my strong enemy, and

from them that hated me. They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the Lord was my stay. He brought me forth also into a large place: he delivered me, because he delighted in me." 2 Sam. xxii. 5—20.

There is no hyperbole; no poetic exaggeration in this description. The intervention from above by which Israel will be delivered will be truly such as is here described. Each word shall be fulfilled. And it is they who are thus marvellously delivered who shall afterwards form that congregation in the midst of which their King and their Deliverer—their once rejected, but then acknowledged BROTHER—the true Joseph, shall stand, and with them praise Jehovah. Of their songs of thanksgiving, this shall be pre-eminently one.

Yet great as is the mercy and grace shown to those who shall prove that wondrous deliverance, and great as will be the glory and the joy granted to them and others in the millennial earth, yet there is another portion of the Church\* whose place though circumstantially very different during the time of their militancy in the earth, is nevertheless, one of even higher privilege and honour. For they who constitute the family of faith during the present dispensation, whilst having the same *spiritual* blessings that will be vouchsafed to Israel in the day of

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\* I use the word "Church" advisedly. It is a word which, in its eternal sense, includes *all* the redeemed. The Church of the first-born ones (*των πρωτοτοκων*) which will rise in "the first resurrection," are only a part of that one body that will in the new heavens and earth be known as the mystical body of Christ, and which will include the redeemed of *all* dispensations.



their forgiveness, have also the added honour of suffering *for and with* the gospel of Christ. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." "Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God." The delivered remnant of Israel will indeed suffer, but not for the gospel's sake: they will suffer for their own sin in having rejected the gospel; and then, like Paul, will be saved by a miracle of grace. Nor will millennial Israel and others in the millennium be called to suffer *with* the gospel, because the time of the triumph and supremacy of Truth will have come. "Sorrow and sighing shall flee away." But it is otherwise with those of whom it is said, "Behold, I and the children whom Jehovah hath given me are for signs and for wonders," &c. They are called to suffer *for and with* the Truth. It is their distinctive honour. To this separated company—this "little flock," associated with Christ during the day of the strength of evil, we belong. They who were called into this honoured association with their Head, were *first* gathered out of Israel, but sovereign grace subsequently incorporated elect Gentiles with them. "Other sheep I have that are not of this (the Israelitish) fold; them also I must bring; and there shall be one flock (ποιμνη) and one shepherd." This little body, though divided and weakened, and having no longer the miraculous power which accredited their early testimony, have, nevertheless, the light of Truth still amongst them, and are thereby still a moral sign to *Israel*. But if Israel despised that light when it shone

in unity, and brightness, and power, no wonder that it should be despised now, when it shines in febleness. Yet light is light, whether it shines in febleness, or in strength : and they who cleave to it in the day of its weakness, shall not be separated from it in the day of its refulgence and glory.

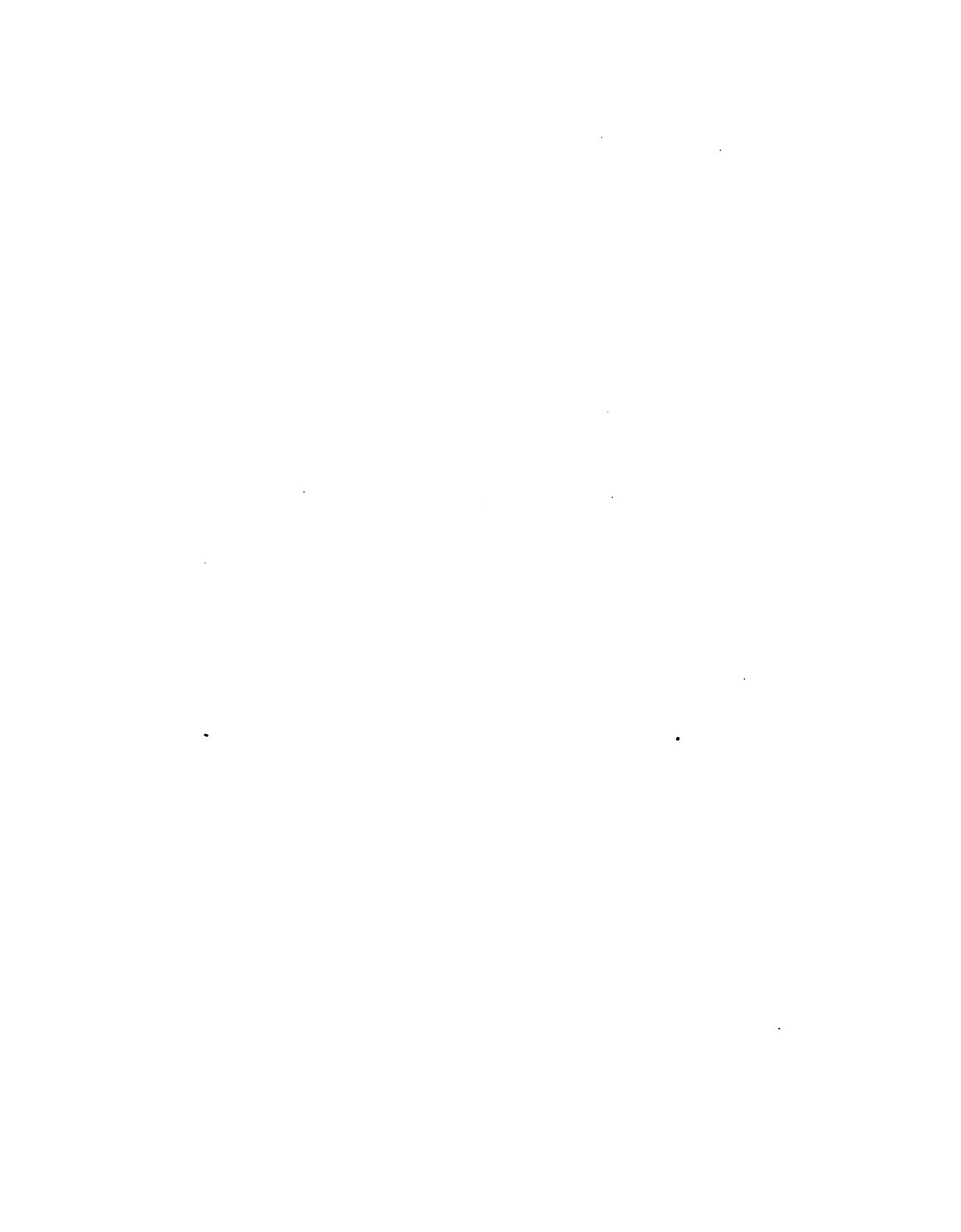
Thus then, under these three quotations are comprised the three periods into which the earthly history of the Church divides itself, during this and the millennial dispensations. The *first* quotation refers to that which is in fulfilment *last*; viz., the period of the Church's millennial rest. It leads us on to the Day of God; the blessed end being thus presented to us before we hear of the antecedent sorrow. The *second* refers to that wondrous and momentous hour when the Day of man, whilst evolving all the plenitude of its darkness, is suddenly met by the manifested glory of the King of Israel, and gives place unto the Day of God. The *last* quotation refers to that already lengthened period of suffering and sorrow, during which the children of faith tread their present thorny, yet honoured path.

The Hebrew mind, even when converted, was very indisposed to receive the truth respecting this *present* period. They longed for the time of Messiah-gladness (which they *had* imagined to be nigh) when "sorrow and sighing should flee away." They hoped for the hour when it will be said, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings:" and they would gladly have escaped the necessity of owning that there was also a time (and a prolonged

time) during which the preacher of "good tidings" has, in sorrow and anguish to say, "Who hath believed our report?" Hebrew Christians and Gentile Christians will yet have experimentally to realize the difference between these two periods; far more than they have ever done during the long period of the slumber of Gentile Christianity.

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THOUGHTS  
ON PARTS OF THE  
PROPHECY OF ISAIAH.



# THOUGHTS

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BY

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## CORRIGENDA.

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*The reader is requested to correct with a pen or pencil such  
errata as are in the subjoined list, marked with an asterisk.*

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- \* Page 31, line 16, for *even had to say* read *ever had to say*.
  - \* Page 32, line 24, for *Chron. xxv. 18* read *2 Chron. xxv. 18*.
  - \* Page 45, line 6, for *the Flood* read *the Full*.
  - \* Page 110, line 16, for *prudence and* read *and prudence*.
  - \* Page 111, line 17, for *even acted* read *ever acted*.
  - Page 129, line 7, for *eclectic* read *eclectic*.
  - Page 172, line 19, for *εκκλησις* read *εκκλησια*.
  - Page 181, for *כְּפָרָת* read *כְּפָרָת*.
  - Page 183, for *כַּכּ* read *כְּכָר*.
  - Page 220, for *כּו* read *כִּי*.
  - Page 238, for *הנער הנער* read *הנער*.
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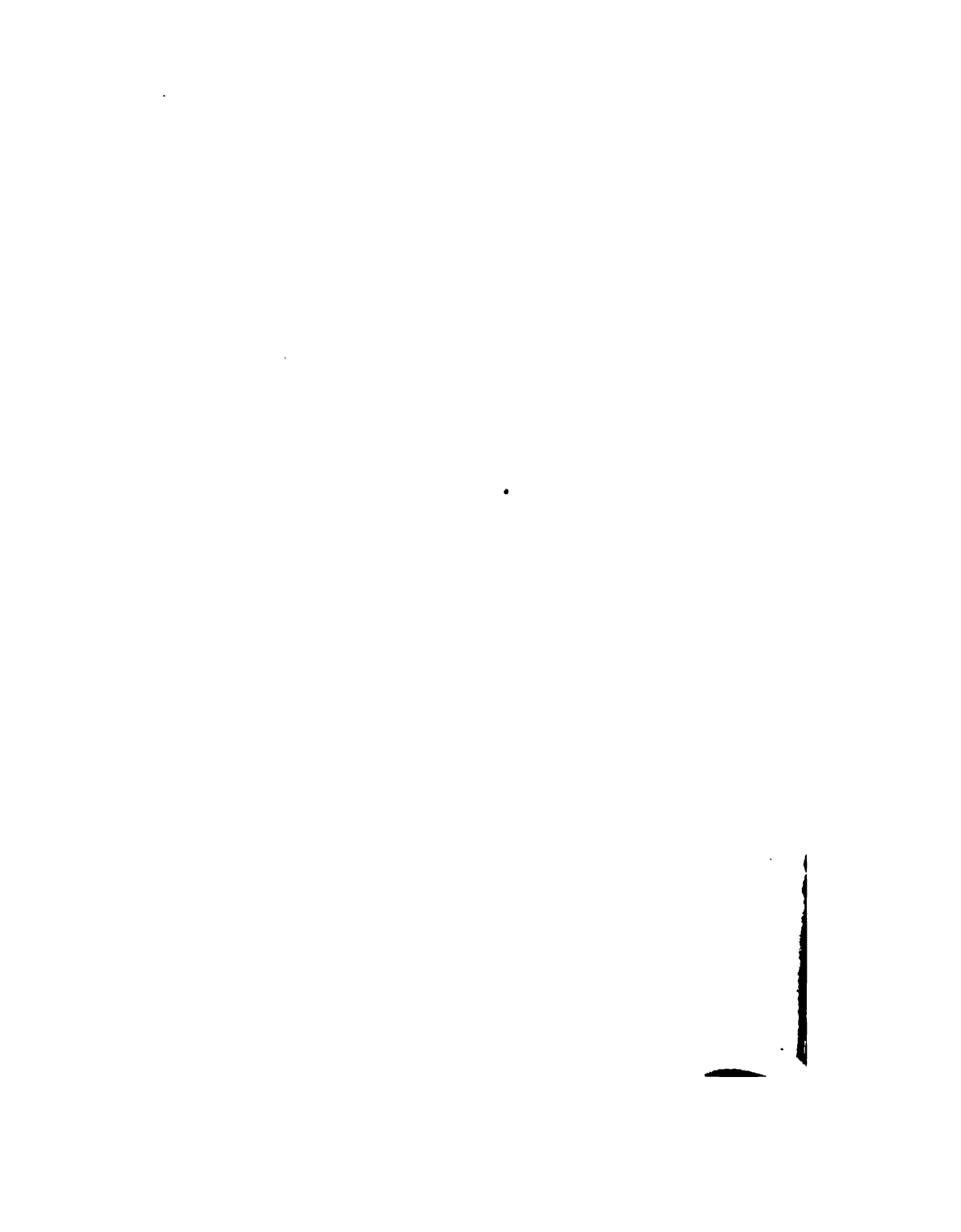
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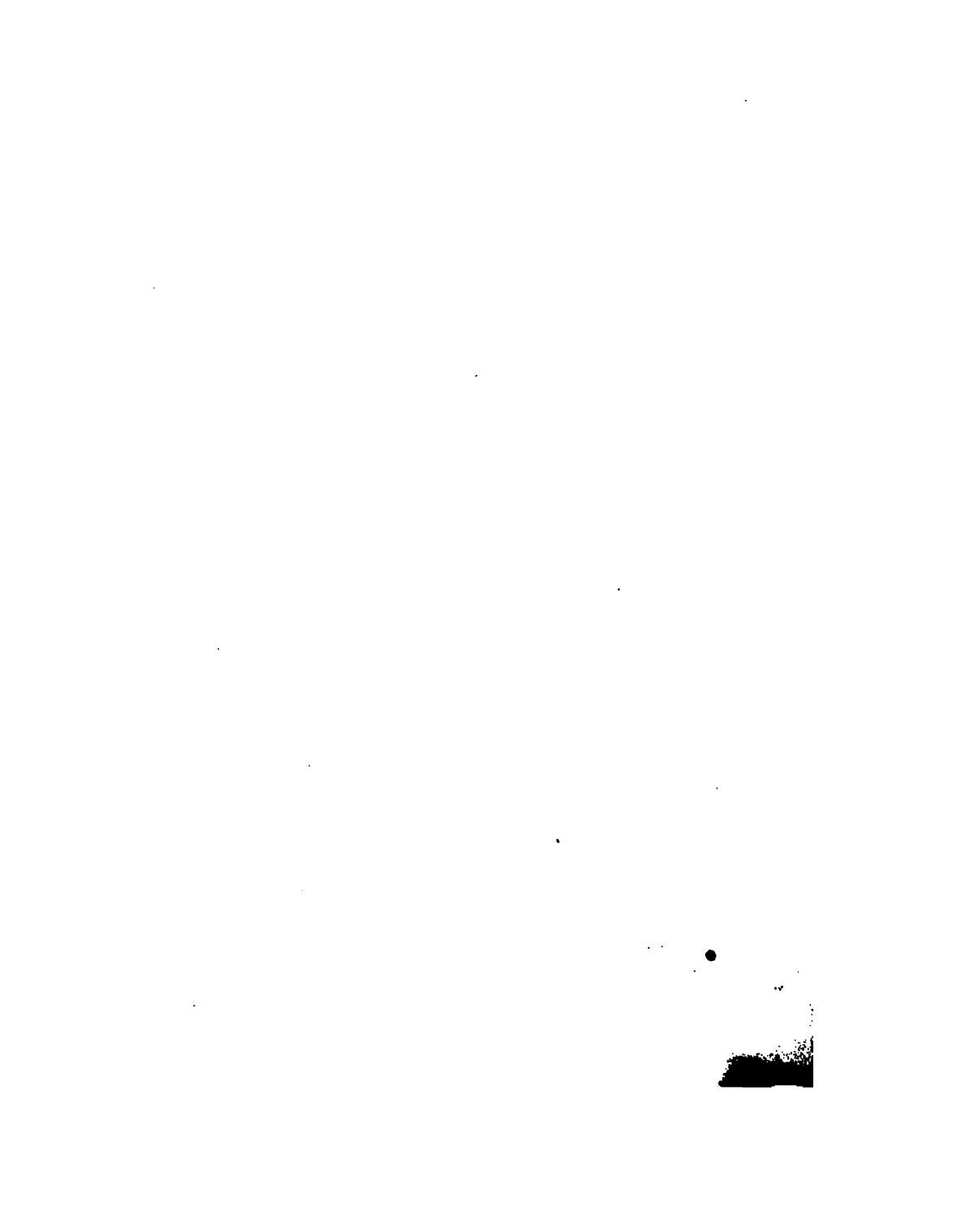
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